

WILD WEST WEEKLY

A Magazine Containing Stories, Sketches, Etc., of Western Life

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YOUNG WILD WEST'S RANCH

—OR—

THE RENEGADES OF RILEY'S RUN

By AN OLD SCOUT

CHAPTER I.

WILD BREAKS A ROAN COLT.

"Hooray for Weston, I say! I'm from Weston County, Wyoming, an' I have struck Weston town, Dakoty! Git around there, you lazy greaser! Don't you see that roan colt chewin' ther mane off that gray mare? A greaser was never any good, an' I'll give a hundred dollars if any one kin prove that ain't so. Gentlemen, I am Wal Wisp, ther rancher, an' I'm lookin' for Young Wild West."

The speaker was a typical ranchman of the West. He was seated upon a powerful gray horse that was at the head of a herd of twenty-four sleek, clean-limbed horses that showed signs of never having been broken.

The greaser he referred to was a half-breed fellow, Indian on one side and Mexican on the other. He was a hang-dog, surly looking man, who looked as though he was none too good to stab a person in the back if he had a grudge to work off.

But he was used to being talked to in that way, and instead of resenting what was said to him, he flew to obey.

The scene was in front of the post-office in the mining town of Weston, in the Black Hills, not many miles from the border line of Wyoming.

There were probably a dozen men standing in front of the post-office, and they were looking at the herd of horses critically, for nearly every one of them was a judge of horseflesh.

In those days horses were plentiful, and in that region there were more good ones than bad, for they were bred from the real old stock of the native wild steed.

But they were saddle horses only. Their nature apparently was for man to ride them, but not to drive them before a wagon.

Of the class of horses Wal Wisp had brought into Weston but few were broken to harness and driven with any degree of safety or success.

"You're a healthy lookin' lot of galoots standin' around here," resumed the ranchman, sizing up the red-shirted miners and bordermen. "I should say that you are well fed, an' that ther air must be inwigoratin' up here. Kin any of you tell me whar I kin find Young Wild West?"

"You kin find him right over at ther office of the Wild West Mining and Improvement Company, stranger," retorted old Sam Murdock, the postmaster. "Go right up ther street an' turn to ther right, an' you'll see ther sign over ther door. I heerd him say he expected them horses."

"All right, old man. I'll go right over. Look out, there! Keep them critters in some sort of a line, you ugly-faced greaser! I want my stock to show up at ther best advantage.

Ther fust impression a feller has of stock of this kind wants ter be a good one."

At a crack from the ranchman's whip the horses started off, some trotting gently and others rearing and plunging as though they wanted to be free from the lariats.

It was scarcely half a mile to the office of the Wild West Mining and Improvement Company, and with a flourish of his whip, Wal Wisp rode on ahead of the herd and rapidly neared it.

He reined in his steed before the rather pretentious-looking building that bore the sign the postmaster had spoken of and quickly dismounted.

The man knew it was a sign that he saw over the door, but he could not read it, as his education had been sadly neglected.

"This is ther place, all right," he muttered. "Now to see Young Wild West."

It being a rather warm day, the door was ajar, and without going to the formality of knocking, Wal Wisp walked in, whip in hand.

There were but five people in the office, two of whom were scarcely more than boys.

"Good-afternoon, gents!" he called out. "Is Young Wild West in here?"

"Yes," came the reply from one of the younger inmates of the room, who was handsome and as straight as an arrow, and whose waving chestnut hair hung over his shoulders. "Yes, I am Young Wild West. What can I do for you?"

"Great ginger! So you're Young Wild West, hey? I had an idea that you was a young feller, but I didn't think that you was nothin' more'n a boy. Say, you ain't foolin' me, are yer? If you say you are Young Wild West, an' you ain't, I might take it in my head to lay you 'cross my knee an' give you what yer mammy used ter give you when you was bad."

"Oh, I am not fooling you," was the reply, in an easy, matter-of-fact tone. "I am Young Wild West. Now, tell me who you are."

"Me? Oh, I'm Wal Wisp, from Roarin' Ranch, Weston County, Wyoming! I've brought ther two dozen horses you ordered, if you are Young Wild West."

"Ah!" exclaimed the handsome young fellow, stepping forward and putting out his hand. "I am glad to meet you, Mr. Wisp. Shake!"

The ranchman took the proffered hand, and then he received such a grip that he fairly winced.

"Whew!" he cried. "That don't feel like ther grip of a boy, either. I reckon I've made jist a leetle mistake in you, Mr. West. Ouch! Your hand's a regular vise."

"Oh, that's nothing," was the rejoinder. "Shall I give you a good squeeze?"

"No! That's quite enough. Come on out an' take a look at ther critters I've brought over for yer as that greaser of mine trots 'em up here."

Young Wild West followed him out, and so did the other four who were in the office.

These were Jim Dart, Cheyenne Charlie, the famous government scout; Jack Robedee and Walter Jenkins, the bookkeeper of the company, of which the four were the principal stockholders.

They were all tried and true friends of Young Wild West, but the first-mentioned three were his partners in the mining business.

Jim Dart was about his age and, like him, was single, but Cheyenne Charlie and Jack Robedee were married, having taken wives since they came to Weston.

They all were interested in the horses, since it was really the company that was purchasing them and not Young Wild West individually.

But such things were always left to him, and if he passed upon the horses and said they were all right that would settle it.

They would be accepted and paid for right away.

The ranchman's half-breed employee was now driving the little herd up, and it did not take Wild and his companions more than a couple of seconds to satisfy themselves that they were all right, as far as appearances went, anyway.

When Wal Wisp and the man had succeeded in getting the animals to stand quiet, so they could be looked over, the four partners proceeded to make a close examination of their points, the bookkeeper merely looking on interestedly.

"I ain't goin' to say a word about ther critters till you are all through, Mr. West," said the ranchman. "You sent word over what yer wanted, an' I brought what I thought would fill ther bill."

"Very well," was the reply. "I rather like to hear you talk that way, because no matter what you were to say about the horses, we would know whether they suited or not."

In about fifteen minutes our friends had looked them over to their full satisfaction.

"Well, how do you like 'em? Are they what you wanted?"

"They are all right. You have brought over just what we sent for."

"Thank you! I s'pose there's no use in me wastin' my breath tellin' you what they are, then?"

"Not a bit of it. Have any of them been broken yet?"

"Nigh all of 'em. Jose, ther greaser here, kin ride any of 'em, though."

As Wal Wisp said this there was a twinkle in his eyes.

He knew there was at least one in the herd that no one on the ranch had been able to ride.

But if he could furnish a little amusement for Young Wild West and his partners, he was bound to do so.

"Pick out ther one you think is ther wust one of ther bunch, Mr. West," he added. "I'll let Jose show you what he kin do with him. Ther greaser is about ther best horseman I've got on my ranch, an' what he can't ride I guess no one kin."

Jose did not appear to be very anxious, and he watched our hero closely as he stepped up to pick out what he took to be the most fractious steed of the lot.

When he saw him point to the roan colt the face of the greaser fell.

That was the ugliest and most unruly one of the bunch, and it had thrown him two or three times already.

Wal Wisp broke into a laugh.

"You are a good judge, by ginger!" he exclaimed. "That is about ther only one what can't be rode, unless Jose kin ride him. What about it, Jose?"

"Me try him," was the reply from the half-breed.

"Before your man gives us an exhibition you had better come into the office and we will settle up. We will take the horses, just as they are, and at the price given. It makes no difference whether your man can ride the horse or not. If he can't ride him, we will soon find some one that will."

Again the ranchman broke into a laugh.

Evidently he thought that Young Wild West was much mistaken in his idea of the roan.

But he walked into the office and said nothing of his thoughts just then.

The money was soon paid over and a receipt given for same, and then they walked out to where the greaser was in charge of the bunch of horses.

At a word from Young Wild West Jack Robedee and Cheyenne Charlie each took a couple of the horses and led them over to the stable of the company, where stalls had been prepared for them.

When they came back they were accompanied by Ike the darkey, who was employed as stableman and man-of-all-work by Wild and Jim Dart, who lived in neat bachelor quarters and had a Chinese servant to cook for them.

"I guess," said Wild, "that we had better stable the whole lot of them, except the one Mr. Wisp's man is going to exhibit with. They belong to us now, and we may as well take care of them."

"A good idea," nodded the ranchman. "That roan is a whole lot all by himself—quite enough for a dozen—as you'll see directly. But Jose will ride him, won't you, Jose?"

"Me try," was all the greaser would say.

Then Wal Wisp laughed some more.

He could not have been more tickled if he had been on his way to a circus.

Then he got his mouth close to the ear of Young Wild West and whispered:

"A man would have to work with that critter a week afore he would be able to ride him."

Then it was our hero's turn to smile.

"You think so?" he said.

"I know so."

"Well, we will wait and see what Jose will do with him; then we will see about that."

The rancher looked surprised.

But he said no more just then, for the greaser was getting ready to make the attempt to ride the roan colt.

Ike, the darkey, had brought out a bridle, and with the united efforts of Jack and the greaser it was put on the fractious steed.

"Don't you want a saddle?" Jack asked.

"No, me ride bareback," was the reply.

"All right. Say when you're ready an' I'll give you a boost."

The darkey was holding the horse by the head, and it was all he could do to keep upon his feet.

Jose said he was ready, and then Robedee gave him a lift to the roan's back.

Then the circus began.

The greaser was not only wiry and tough, but alert.

He was a good horseman, and was all right till things got going decidedly wrong with him; then he would lose his nerve.

"Hang onto him, you yaller-faced tarantula!" called out Wal Wisp. "You want to show these gents here in Weston what kind of horsemen we have over at Roarin' Ranch. Stick your heels into him, an' if ther cayuse rolls with you, let him, that's all!"

The unbroken colt was now prancing about like a jumping-jack and switching its tail with the force of a windmill.

The greaser was sticking to his back as though he had been glued there, though, and it looked as though he was going to conquer.

Suddenly the horse started forward like a shot.

But when he had covered a bare fifteen yards he stopped as quickly as he had started, flinging his hind hoofs high in the air as he did so.

Away went the greaser, turning a somersault like an acrobat in a circus and landing on his hands and knees ten feet ahead of the horse.

Wal Wisp's time to enjoy the burst of merriment he was holding in check had come, and he let it out loud and long.

But he was the only one who did laugh.

Young Wild West and his companions lost the sense of the humorous part of it on account of the way the ranchman acted.

He did not seem to care whether the half-breed broke his neck or not, so long as he got a good tumble.

Cheyenne Charlie had coiled a lariat ready for use, and when the roan started to scamper away after relieving himself of the man on his back, he very deftly lassoed the animal about the fore-leg and threw him.

Wild ran over to the spot, and before the horse could get up he was on his back.

"We will see if you can throw me off!" he exclaimed. "I haven't had any of this sort of exercise in some time. Whoop! Get away, now!"

This was certainly the most aggressive treatment the colt had yet received, and for a moment the animal stood stock still, as though thinking of what to do.

But only for a moment!

Then he began to go through the same actions as when the greaser was on his back.

Wild was waiting for him to dart ahead, and then he would show the animal a trick of his own.

He kept stopping him smartly with the palm of his hand, and the horse kept jumping in a vain effort to dislodge him.

The beast was quivering with rage and excitement, but the dashing young fellow on his back was as cool as though he was simply mounted on one of the most gentle of ponies.

"Let yourself go!" he called out to his mount. "I want to see you throw me."

Then the horse did let himself go!

He jumped ahead like an arrow from a bow, or tried to jump ahead, we might say, for the very instant he leaped Young Wild West flung himself back so far that it seemed as if he meant to lie flat on his back, at the same time giving a jerk at the bridle rein, which caused the animal to rear high in the air and then come down less than a yard ahead.

And when the horse reared up Wild quickly flung his weight forward, lying close upon the neck.

Down came the fractious roan upon all four feet, and he remained standing, with dilated nostrils and quivering in every muscle.

But it was not our hero's purpose to allow him to stand still very long.

He had undertaken to ride him, and that was what he was going to do.

"Easy, now," he said, patting the arched neck. "Take it easy for just another minute and you will be all right."

Then he gave a sharp slap and tightened upon the bridle.

The horse started off at a quick gallop, but not with the suddenness that he had moved before.

The powerful arms of the boy held him in check, and inside of ten seconds he had him down to a trot.

"I guess he's got him!" said Wal Wisp with a gasp. "He seems to know his business. There! He—— No, he ain't got him yet! Ther critter is goin' to try an' roll him off."

This was the case, sure enough. The roan was going to make one more attempt to dislodge the rider from his back.

But Young Wild West knew every trick of a bucking mustang and had never failed to conquer a horse after once taking him in hand.

The sorrel stallion he prized so highly he had broken in twenty minutes, after Cheyenne Charlie and other bordermen of note had given up the task and were about to turn him loose on the prairie.

And since that time the beautiful steed had never failed him once.

Up to every trick and turn known to a vicious horse, Wild simply smiled when he realized that the roan colt was about to roll to get him off its back.

When the animal dropped he was sitting calmly on its broadside by the time it touched the ground.

And when the rolling began he kept on top all the time.

Half a dozen times the horse tried to get free from the boy, but it was no use.

Young Wild West knew the battle was won when finally the roan ceased its efforts and lay still upon the ground.

"Get up!" he called out sharply, giving a jerk on the bridle.

The creature obeyed, just as though it was used to that sort of thing.

Wild was sitting upon his back when he did get up, too, and then pulling him around, he gave him a gentle pat on the neck and sent him trotting back to the spot where his friends and the ranchman were waiting.

"I guess you'll do!" exclaimed Wal Wisp. "You've got him broke of his tricks, as sure as guns!"

CHAPTER II.

WAL WISP WANTS TO SELL HIS RANCH.

"See here!" exclaimed Cheyenne Charlie, turning to the ranchman. "You don't seem to know what you struck when you come here. Young Wild West is called ther prince of ther saddle, an' there ain't no man or boy livin' what kin manage a horse like him. Why, ther man ain't born yet what kin match him!"

"I reckon you're about right," was the reply. "Jose, yer lazy coyote, you oughter be ashamed of yourself! You are ther best horseman I've got on ther ranch, an' that ain't sayin' nothin' 'cordin' to what jest happened now. I think you deserve a good kick for gittin' throwed!"

The greaser was standing aside, his eyes flashing and a sullen look on his face as he rubbed a knee that had been injured by the fall from the horse.

Wal Wisp stepped over to him and gave him a kick that almost lifted him from his feet.

There is an old saying that the trodden worm will turn, and the half-breed, having long been subjected to taunts and blows from the man who hired him, could not stand it any longer.

With a scream of rage, he drew an ugly looking knife and darted for the ranchman.

"Hold on, there!" cried Young Wild West, and with surprising quickness he knocked the weapon from the greaser's hand. "That will do, Jose. I wouldn't have blamed you a bit if you had struck at him with your fist, but knives don't go here, not while I am around."

"Wha-at!" stammered the ranchman, in a rage. "You—you yellow hound! I'll kill you for that!"

He grabbed his revolver as he said this, and just as he pulled it from the holster to shoot the man, our hero knocked it from his hand, sending it upon the ground within two feet of where the knife lay.

"Stop!"

The one word was sufficient to make Wal Wisp stand still in his tracks.

"You had better pay the man off, if you owe him anything. I have an idea that he wants to quit his job."

As Wild made this remark the greaser gave a nod of approval.

"Sixty-one dollars he owe me," he said.

"You lie! It is only fifty-nine!" Wisp replied, breaking into a rage again.

"Sixty-one," persisted the greaser.

"It ain't. I'll——"

He made a move to draw his other revolver, but Wild had him by the arm in no time.

"Mr. Wisp," he observed, in his usual calm and easy way, "we have a way of running things on the square around here. I want you to understand that I insist that you pay this man sixty-one dollars and let him go about his business. You have abused him worse than the meanest kind of a dog ought to be treated. You claim that you owe him two dollars less than he says it is, but I will bet a box of cigars that he is right in his claim, though I know nothing about it."

"You ain't tryin' to pick a muss with me, are you, Young Wild West?"

The ranchman was trembling with rage as he asked our hero this question.

"Pick a muss with you? Not for the world! I won't see the meanest fellow creature there is abused for nothing, though. If I had wanted to pick a muss with you I would have gone about it in a different way; I would have shot you in your tracks, when you kicked the man, instead of doing what I did. You are in Weston now, and you have got to behave yourself while you are here. If you don't, I'll make you!"

Wal Wisp stepped back a few paces and gave a gasp.

The look of anger gradually faded from his face, and then he blurted out:

"I cave, Young Wild West! It ain't ther way I generally do business when I'm crossed, but seein's I'm in Weston town, I'll cave in to yer. Out in Weston County, Wyoming, it might be different."

"I am glad to hear you talk that way," and a quiet smile played about the lips of Young Wild West for a moment.

"I'll give ther greaser ther sixty-one dollars, as you say; an' then he kin go to Ballyhoo, or some other place. But he mustn't let me set eyes on him ag'in, 'cause if he does I'll let a bullet through his gizzard."

Our friends noticed that there was a peculiar gleam in the eyes of the half-breed as this was said.

They all knew what it meant.

The man Jose was but waiting for the chance to be revenged upon the ranchman, and at the first opportunity he would slay him.

The man's wages were promptly counted out, and then with a grateful look to the young prince of the saddle, the greaser went to where his horse was hitched to a tree, and mounting, rode away.

"That's ther last I'll ever see of that yaller coyote, I reckon," observed Wal Wisp, turning to our hero, just as though a harsh word had not been passed between them.

"I wouldn't be too sure of that, if I were you. Those sort of people are treacherous, you know."

"Yes, but that feller is too much of a coward to ever face me ag'in. Why, cawlin' moccasin snakes! I'm used to shootin' half a dozen sich fellers as him afore I eat breakfast of a mornin'!"

Young Wild West had put the ranchman down for just what

he was—a boisterous, reckless, honest man, but a cowardly one, withal.

As long as he could scare a person he would howl away at a great rate; but the moment the wind was taken out of his sails, so to speak, he would become as gentle as a kitten.

Wal Wisp took his departure soon after that, with the promise that he would come back and bid them adieu before he set out for Roaring Ranch, as he called his place in Wyoming.

He rode directly over to the Gazoo Hotel, for like nearly all men of his class, he felt like "celebratin'" on the strength of the sale he had made.

He chose the Gazoo because it was the most pretentious looking hotel in the town, and money was no object to him just then.

He had sold twenty-four horses, and if it cost him the full amount he had received for them, he was bound to have a good time in Weston before he left it.

"Whar's yer hostler?" he bawled out, as he came to a halt in front of the place. "I reckon I'll put up overnight in this here town, an' this seems to be as likely a lookin' ranch as any. Send a man out here to take care of my horse, or I'll look for another place mighty quick!"

The stableman was forthcoming at once, and with a nod of pleasure the ranchman dismounted.

"Take good care of ther critter," he said, tossing the fellow a silver piece.

Then he walked into the barroom and found about half a dozen miners hanging around, waiting to be asked to drink.

These men were of the sort who are too lazy to work much, and enjoy hanging around such places.

They never amount to much, and no one knew this better than Wal Wisp, who was a hard working man himself.

"Step up an' name yer patickler pizen, boys!" he cried. "I know you are all dry—every one of yer. I kin tell by ther looks on yer that you are as dry as a pine chip on a hearthstone."

The men did step up, very glad to receive the invitation.

"What's your name, young man?" queried the ranchman of the clerk behind the bar.

"Sedgwick, sir—John Sedgwick," was the reply.

The clerk was used to meeting such men, and he was always willing to humor them, so long as they did not go too far.

"Good enough! What'll you have? John Sedgwick, hey? Well, that name sounds all right, whether it is or not. I'm Wal Wisp, from Roaring Ranch, Weston County, Wyoming. I've jest sold two dozen horses to Young Wild West, an' I got a good price for 'em. Now, I'm goin' to have a little time to-night an' set out for my ranch in ther mornin'."

"That's right," replied the bartender. "Weston is just as good a place to stay overnight in as any in the world. Good people live here, and things are run pretty much on the square."

"I know that. Young Wild West told me that a little while ago. Say! Young Wild West is a great feller, ain't he?"

"None better ever lived."

"That's what I think. Well, here she goes, pilgrims!" and he drained his glass at a single gulp.

He kept up a rattling fire of questions, drinking about every five minutes, and presently he was pretty well intoxicated.

"Say!" he said suddenly. "I forgot something, Sedgwick."

"What is it, Mr. Wisp?"

"I forgot to register."

"You don't have to here. We are not up to that yet."

"Oh!"

"If we were to put out a register here for some of our guests to write their names down they would start to shoot the book full of holes."

"Ha, ha, ha! That's jest what I was thinkin' about doin'. You're a cute one, you are. Say! Do you know, I like this town first rate? Hanged if I wouldn't like to live here. If I could sell my ranch I'd come to-morrer. Don't know any one who wants to buy a ranch, or trade a good property around here for it, do you?"

"No. Have you asked Young Wild West?"

"No. Do you think he would take to a proposition of that kind?"

"I don't know. He's generally ready to make a deal when it comes to getting rid of some of his property. Young Wild West is one of the richest residents of Weston, and his property is the most valuable. The chances are that if you could get him interested in the ranching business you could strike up a deal with him."

"Hanged if I ain't goin' to see him about it."

By this time Wal Wisp found that he needed a seat, so he went into the back room.

It was not long before he got into a game of cards with a couple of men, and in this manner he spent the rest of the day.

But he had got it into his head that he wanted to dispose of his ranch and try his luck at mining in Weston, and that night after supper he was crying it out to every one he met.

"Who wants to buy a well-stocked ranch?" he would say. "I'll sell, or I'll trade for desirable property here in town."

He had just made this remark for about the fiftieth time, when who should come in but Young Wild West and Cheyenne Charlie, the scout.

The two had been over at the post-office, and hearing that Wal Wisp was still in town and having a big time at the Gazoo, they thought they would drop in and see what was going on.

Brown, the proprietor of the hotel, was a particular friend of Wild's, and when he came down that way the young prince of the saddle usually dropped in and bought a cigar.

"Hello, Mr. Wisp!" exclaimed Wild. "Haven't started for home yet, I see. What's that you are saying—want to sell your ranch?"

"Why, hello, Young Wild West! Jest ther man I want to see. No! I ain't gone home yet; I'm goin' to-morrer some time. Yes, I want to sell my ranch, or trade it for some land here. Can't make a deal with yer, kin I? What'll you have to drink?"

"Come around and see me to-morrow before you go," laughed our hero, who saw that he was too much under the influence of liquor to even talk business. "I have been thinking about buying a ranch this good while. But I won't talk business to you now."

"All right!" and the ranchman appeared to be delighted.

He started in to tell all about his ranch, but Wild checked him.

"Wait till to-morrow, I said," he told him.

Wisp had sense enough to drop the subject then, and after he had bought the best cigar in the house for his horse customer he was content to drop him.

Wild and Charlie remained at Brown's for perhaps an hour, listening to the talk of the men, who were giving out the latest news from the neighboring towns of Spondulicks and Devil Creek.

Then they set out for their respective homes.

As they left the hotel they noticed a form skulking close to the side of the building.

Whenever Wild saw a suspicious looking person he always made it a point to investigate.

So he quickly glided up to the form and found it to be a man, who was evidently lying in wait for some one.

"Who are you waiting for?" he asked.

"Me no wait for you, Young Wild West," was the answer.

"Ah! So it is you, Jose? Well, you had better go away and let Wal Wisp alone. Take my advice, now, and keep away from him."

"No," replied the greaser, for it was no other than he. "Me kill Wal Wisp!"

"And get killed yourself. Go on away, if you value your skin. A man of your stamp don't stand any show with the kind of people there are around these diggings. If you attempt to kill Wisp you'll get riddled with bullets."

"Me no care; me kill Wal Wisp!"

That was all that he could get from the greaser.

CHAPTER III.

A DEAL IS MADE, WITH A PROVISIO.

Just about the time Young Wild West was talking to the greaser at the side of the Gazoo Hotel a train arrived at the depot in Weston.

It had come in from Spondulicks and was a couple of minutes late.

Among the passengers to get off were two who were bound to attract particular attention.

They were a tall, wiry looking man, attired in a loud plaid suit, and a lady who must have weighed in the neighborhood of three hundred pounds.

She was attired in the height of fashion, and this was quite sufficient to make her attract lots of attention in these parts.

since the ladies of that region were not given to wearing such fashionable costumes.

But her corpulent figure was something to look at, since she looked to be as large as the "fat woman" in a museum.

There were not many passengers to get off, but what there were seemed to be united in gazing at the couple, though it was more than likely that they had plenty of opportunity to look at them on the way over from Spondulicks.

The lady and gentleman had been in Weston before; in fact, they were well known there.

They were Mr. and Mrs. Bub Sprague.

Bub, who was a friend of Young Wild West, had married a rich widow in Denver; as he was a variety actor of considerable standing, it had been his great desire to run a theatrical company of his own, and go around and treat the innocents in the various cities and towns to a good show.

The show had been very successful in Weston, where the initial performance had been given, as it had been in Devil Creek and several other towns in that section.

But when it began to travel East it started to lose ground, so it seemed, and one day Mrs. Sprague put her foot down and refused to pay any more bills.

That ended the show.

And now Bub and his wife had come back to Weston with a whole lot of fine clothes and very little money.

It was the actor's intention to see Young Wild West and ask him for some sort of a job.

As soon as the couple reached the level below the station they set out straight for the Gazoo Hotel, where they had put up when they were in town with the show.

Bub knew Brown would trust him if his money ran short before he got a chance to earn some more.

The two were about half-way to the hotel when they met Wild West and Cheyenne Charlie.

Wild had succeeded in making the Mexican half-breed go away from the Gazoo, and was on his way home.

He knew the couple the moment he saw them loom up in the darkness.

So did Charlie, but neither of them said a word till Bub recognized them.

"Why, hello, Wild!" cried Sprague, darting forward and catching our hero by the wrist with both hands. "You can't imagine how glad I am to see you."

"Well, I'm real glad to see you. How do you do, Mrs. Sprague?"

"Quite well, thank you," replied the fat lady, as she put out her hand. "And how are you, Mr. Cheyenne?"

"Oh! I am all right," said the scout. "So you have quit the show business, have you?"

"Yes, and we had never ought to have started in it."

"Oh, I don't know," spoke up her husband. "We had lots of fun and excitement while we were in it."

"And I lost nearly every dollar I had!" she exclaimed. "There was a whole lot of fun in that, wasn't there?"

"Don't talk about that now, Marie."

"I will talk about it. I just want to tell Young Wild West and Cheyenne Charlie right here how you made me lose the snug little fortune I had when I married you. I'll—"

"Never mind, Mrs. Sprague, I should say nothing about it just now, if I were you," Wild interposed. "I suppose you are going to remain in Weston for some little time, so you will have ample time to tell us all about it."

This put a damper on the woman, and she said no more.

"We expect to stay in Weston permanently—that is, if I can get a job. Wild, I don't suppose you could give a fellow a job, could you? We are pretty nearly broke, and this is the town I thought we had better strike before all our money was gone."

"I guess we can give you a job," our hero answered. "Come over to the office in the morning and we will see about it."

"Thank you ever so much; I will. Come on, Marie! We will get to the hotel as soon as possible, because you must be tired out from lugging so much fat all day."

"You shut your insulting mouth!" was the angry retort, and then the couple walked off.

"Bub's troubles have commenced now," observed Cheyenne Charlie. "It was all right so long as her money lasted; but now he has got to look out! She's got a neat bit of a temper, I reckon."

"I guess you are about right," replied Wild. "There is an old saying that 'a fool and his money are soon parted,' and I guess that is the case with the woman. Bub's venture in the show business certainly must have proved disastrous."

Well, I guess he is a pretty good worker, so we can find something for him to do."

"Sure! Say, Wild, was you serious when you told Wal Wisp to come over in the morning and talk business about sellin' his ranch?"

"Oh, yes, I was serious. I have often thought that it would be nice to have a ranch off on the prairie somewhere, so I could go there for a few days and hunt and fool with the cattle and horses."

"It is nice on a well stocked ranch. I was brought up on one, you know."

"Yes, so you have told me before. Well, I have never spent much of my time ranching, but I think I would soon learn all about it. Charlie, if Wal Wisp comes to the office sober to-morrow and talks business, I am going to ride back with him and take a look at this ranch."

"And that means that you will buy it, if it is as he represents it to be," answered Charlie.

"Yes."

"Well, I am mighty glad to hear that. I don't know what I would like better just now than to spend a few days on a ranch."

"You will have the chance, it is likely. Of course, it may be that Wal Wisp is only talking of selling because he is under the influence of liquor, and is doing it for mere brag. He is willing to trade the ranch for property here in Weston. I might dispose of that eighty acres that has never been worked in a trade with him."

"That's a fine piece of property, Wild. It is worth a great deal of money."

"I know that. But I have plenty without that."

"That's so, too."

At this point of the conversation the two reached the corner where they had no part for the night, so they each went to their respective homes, after bidding a cheery good-night, as was their wont.

The next morning about nine, when Young Wild West and his three partners, along with some of the other stockholders in the Wild West Mining and Improvement Company, were gathered in the office, Wal Wisp rode up to the door and dismounted.

The ranchman had not forgotten the promise he had made the night before.

"Mornin', boys!" he exclaimed as he came in. "Is Young Wild West busy this mornin'?"

"I am at your service, Mr. Wisp," replied our hero, rising to his feet. "Come over here to my desk and sit down."

"Oh, all right." And he lost no time in getting to the chair that was there for the accommodation of visitors.

"Have you got a clear head this morning?" Wild asked, as he glanced at the man and came to the quick conclusion that he was sober as a judge.

"Oh, yes. You see, I didn't drink so very much last night. I'm one of the sort what knows when I've got enough."

"I am glad you are. But I shouldn't like to be the way you are. What you call a little would be a great deal to some one else. I don't drink anything, so I am never in danger of having a 'head' in the morning. Well, what is the proposition you have to make this morning?"

"I want to sell you my ranch."

"You do, eh—for cash money?"

"Yes; or I'll take land for it."

"How long have you had a mind to sell?" Wild queried.

"Not before yesterday afternoon. This is the first time I was ever in your town, an' I like it so much that I'd like to live here. I'm an old bachelor, an' I've made a putty good pile from ther ranch my dad left me when he dropped off; an' now I've got it in my head that I ought to try my luck at ther minin' business."

"How many acres of land have you?"

"A little short of a thousand—over half of it cleared land and very fertile. You ride back with me an' take a look at it. If you're thinkin' about goin' to ranchin' I know I'll strike a bargain with yer."

"Well, as you are thinking about locating here in Weston, I'll show you what land I've got that is for sale. After you see it you can inquire around what it is worth and then I'll give you a price on it. If you say so we will go and look at it now."

"I'm ready."

Young Wild West went out with him and walked over to the unimproved property.

They went over it carefully, and Wal Wisp, who was a good

observer, was not slow to notice that there were several thriving claims right near to it.

He expressed himself as liking the property very much, and when they finally got back to the office he sat down and said:

"Now, I am going to make a proposition that is a real one. My ranch is an up-to-date one, for its size. I've got more'n a thousand head of cattle on it an' somethin' like two hundred horses. There's buildin's an' a stockade an' everything to match. I'll turn ther whole thing over to you just as you find it, 'cept the hired help I've got—which is somethin' I can't sell, though you kin hire 'em easy enough, if you want 'em—for ther piece of property you jest showed me an' five thousand dollars in cash."

"Your proposition is all right," replied Wild. "But I will have to see the place first."

"If it ain't as I represent it you don't have to take it."

"Oh, of course not."

"When kin you go over an' see it?"

"I'll go when you go."

"All right. If you will make ther deal on ther grounds I said I know ther ranch is yourn! I hain't told a single lie about ther place."

Wild called his three partners over to the desk.

"Shall we ride over to see the ranch Mr. Wisp wants to sell me?" he asked them.

"It would just snit me," answered Charlie.

"An' me, too," added Jack.

"I would be very much pleased to take a trip of that kind," Jim hastened to say.

"Good! Well, Mr. Wisp, we will go over with you. How long will it take us to get there?"

"It's a good three days' jaunt," was the reply. "But ther trail ain't such a bad one, so we kin make out all right. I was nigh onto four days gittin' here with them horses, but I had to come a little slower with a herd, you know."

"That will make a nice ten days' time for us," observed Jim. "Three to go, four to stay there, and three to come back. I don't know when I have had anything strike me more favorable than this does."

"When are yer goin' back?" Cheyenne Charlie asked the ranchman.

"I did allow to start after dinner," was the retort. "I don't s'pose you people kin be ready so soon as that, kin yer?"

"Oh, yes," our hero answered. "We have a way of getting ready at short notice."

"I reckon you do. You kinder took me at short notice when you interfered when I was going to shoot ther greaser yister-day. You are a regular hustler, an' no mistake."

"I was right in doing what I did, wasn't I?"

"Yes. There's no doubt about that; but I didn't expect it from yer, though."

"Lots of things happen when we are not expecting them."

"Then you think yer kin be ready to go after dinner?"

"As far as I am concerned, I can answer yes," Wild said.

"So can I," spoke up Jim. "I suppose Charlie and Jack will have to see their wives before they can say for sure."

"Don't worry on that," Charlie retorted. "Anna won't object to me goin' anywhere with Wild."

"An' Martha won't try to stop me from goin', either," put in Robedee.

"Well, you fellows go home right away and have the matter settled, then. If you don't come back inside of half an hour we will know that your wives won't allow you to go."

Jack and the scout went out laughing.

In less than the time Wild allotted them they came back.

Both said they would be ready when he was.

"Now, you had better go and tell Arietta about it and see what she says," Charlie remarked. "And you, Jim, had better ask Eloise if you can go."

"That's what's ther matter," chuckled Jack.

But Wild and Jim knew their sweethearts would not object to their going.

They might put on a pout for a few minutes when they heard that they were not to see them for the space of ten days, or perhaps two weeks.

But that would be all.

"Well, you can count on us to be ready to go with you at two o'clock, Mr. Wisp," said our hero, turning to the ranchman. "If we find your ranch to be as you represent it, you can count on your proposition being accepted."

"Can't we have writin' to that effect?" he asked, showing how eager he was to make the deal.

"Yes, if you wish it. Come down to the bank building, and we will have it fixed."

"Good enough!" and the two went out a couple of minutes later and walked over to the bank.

The lawyer who had his office there soon fixed up the papers satisfactory to both.

Virtually Young Wild West was now the owner of a ranch in Wyoming.

Wisp went to the hotel after that and Wild walked over as far as the post-office.

Arietta Murdock was there attending to her duties as post-mistress, and when she saw her young lover come in she looked up and said:

"Wild, I would be willing to wager that you have some new scheme to tell me about. I can read it in your face."

"You are right, little one," he answered. "I have about decided to buy a ranch over in Wyoming, about three days' journey from here."

"Do you mean that?"

"Certainly I do. Why?"

"It just struck me how nice it would be for us girls to go out there and spend a day or two. It would be a change that would do us all good."

"Well, Et, if the deal goes through—which I think will be the case—you can have a chance to go over as soon as I get the ranch in proper shape. Now, then, I want to tell you that we are going to start for Roaring Ranch this afternoon, and we will be gone about ten days."

"I won't object to your going, if you will promise me that you will keep out of danger."

"I'll promise to try to," said Wild.

CHAPTER IV.

OUR FRIENDS START FOR ROARING RANCH.

When Young Wild West got back to the office he found that Jim had gone to the house to get a few trifles packed for the journey to Roaring Ranch.

"I may as well go and do something similar," he said to the bookkeeper.

He went to the house and found Jim pretty busy tying up packages of coffee, sugar and salt.

"What's the matter?" he asked. "Are you afraid we'll get lost on the way over and have to stay in the wilds for a week or so? You have got enough stuff there to last us a month."

"No; I am not afraid of anything like that. But you can't tell what kind of grub Roaring Ranch is stocked with. It is a good idea to know what kind of coffee you are drinking."

"By jingo! That is so, Jim. I never thought of that. You have a great head this morning."

Wild then proceeded to overhaul his supply of trappings and weapons, and when he had selected what he wanted to take with him he went out and paid personal attention to his horse for half an hour.

He liked to have the sorrel beauty looking at his best when he took him out.

And the animal seemed to understand what his master wanted, too, for he allowed him to comb out the long mane and tail without making the least objections.

By dinner-time everything was in readiness for the trip.

Just as Wild was going to the house to wash up and get something to eat he saw Bub Sprague come out of the office and start toward him.

Then it struck him that the actor had said he was coming to the office to see him in the morning.

"Hello, Bub!" he called out. "Have you been in the office waiting for me?"

"Yes; a little while. I couldn't get over before, because I overslept myself, and didn't get up till half an hour ago," was the reply.

"Whew! You are not a very early riser. Why, it is twelve o'clock."

"People in our business generally sleep late. They are up the biggest part of the night, you know, and they must have their rest. I was pretty well tired out when we got here last night, and as it was after twelve when I went to bed I could not help but sleep late."

"Well, I suppose you came over to see about a job?"

"Yes, Wild, if you can do anything for me in that line it will be a great help to me. You see, our money is about all gone, and Marie says she will kill herself before she will sell her costly dresses to buy grub."

Our hero could not help smiling at this.

"I'll try and fix it so she won't kill herself," she said. "We don't want to have any suicides around here; there are enough deaths from other causes. I'll fix you up right away, Bub. I'll put you in as a foreman under Walter Jenkins. We will walk over there and explain it to him."

"There comes Jenkins now," said Bub.

"That's so. I forgot about it being twelve o'clock. Well, I'll tell him. I heard him say the other day that he had all he could attend to, and I guess he won't object to having some one to assist him."

Jenkins, who was the superintendent of the mining in the employ of the four partners, soon reached the spot.

He was acquainted with Sprague, so he promptly greeted him warmly.

"Walter," said Wild, "I guess you can find room for Bub on your job. He is pretty apt, I think, and therefore ought to make a good assistant for you. We will put him on at a salary of five dollars a day at present."

"All right, Wild," was the reply. "A good man will come in very handy, for I must say that there is a trifle more for me to do just now than I can attend to properly."

"Oh, thank you!" exclaimed Bub, who was delighted at the offer and the salary. "When can I go to work?"

"One o'clock, if you are ready."

"I'm ready."

"Well, go and get your dinner and come back ready for work. There will be no real hard work, but you will have to keep your wits about you and your eyes open all the time."

As Bub again thanked the young prince of the saddle for his kindness and then left to tell his wife of his good fortune, Wild turned to Jenkins and said:

"Walter, we are going away for a few days, and we will depend on you to run the mining business for us till we come back. We may be gone as long as two weeks, but I want you to understand that we will not be worrying a bit while we are gone. We know what you are, and I am only telling you so that you will have a chance to ask for any information before we go."

"The whole four of you are going, then?" observed Jenkins.

"Yes."

"Well, I don't know as there is anything I want to ask you. I have been here long enough to know just what to do. As fast as the dust is sifted out it will be sent to the refining station. No, there is nothing that I want to know, unless you have something special that you would like to have done."

"There is nothing special."

"Then you may rest easy. When you come back, even if you stay a month, you will find things running right—I'll stake my life on that."

"I am sure we will, Walter."

"If I am not too inquisitive, may I ask where you are going?"

"I am going over in Wyoming to buy a ranch."

"Buy a ranch!" gasped the superintendent.

"Yes," answered Young Wild West. "I have taken it in my head that I need a ranch with a whole lot of wild cattle and a herd of wild horses on it. I want to liven myself up now and then, and a ranch will be just the thing to do it, I think."

"I guess it will, Wild. You are always looking for excitement, it seems; while as for myself, I like to see things run along smoothly, day in and day out."

"Too tame altogether," and the boy broke into a laugh. "I was cut out for an exciting life, all through, and I am bound to have it, if I am compelled to go in search of the North Pole to find it."

"I believe you would make such an undertaking if it came in your head."

Wild knew that Jenkins was a man who could be depended upon in any and all conditions.

He had spoken to him more to let him know that they were going away than to caution him about running the business straight.

They now went to dinner.

The Chinese cook had prepared a good meal for Wild and Jim, and when they sat down to it they made the best of it, for they did not know how soon they would get another that was as good.

About half-past one Jack Robedee rode over to the house.

He was ready for the journey, and wore a new buckskin suit that had been trimmed with purple fringe by his wife, Martha, who had a mania for that particular color.

"You are all dressed up, Jack," said Wild, as he surveyed

him from head to foot. "Jim, I guess we had better tog up a little, too."

"That's what's the matter," replied Jim. "I guess I'll put on my newest suit."

"So will I, then."

"Wait till you see Charlie," Jack remarked. "Anna has been fixin' his rig up in great style, I guess."

While Wild and Jim were making the change in their costumes, Cheyenne Charlie rode up.

He was attired in a buckskin suit like Jack's, only it was trimmed in green, while a band of silk ribbon of the same color was neatly sewed around his sombrero.

"You'll do," laughed Jack.

"So will you," was the reply. "That purple puts me in mind of a widow just comin' out of mournin', though."

"An' that green fringe of yourn represents Ireland."

"I know it. My grandfather was an Irishman, an' I guess there's enough Irish blood in me to make me stick up for the old country."

"Well, we are both satisfied, anyway."

"That's what's ther matter!"

A few minutes of two Young Wild West and Jim Dan came out of the house.

Both wore suits of buckskin that were trimmed in a rather gaudy, not to say costly, style.

The heavy fringe on Wild's was scarlet, and that on Jim's was a light blue.

Our hero's ash-colored sombrero had a scarlet band around it and a plume of the same hue was sticking up in front.

His hat was one of the regulation sombreros worn by cowboys with a blue silk cord about it.

As the suits of all four of the partners were new, they certainly made a spick-and-span appearance when they mounted their steeds a few minutes later.

They had just got into the saddle when Wal Wisp made his appearance.

"Whew!" cried the ranchman. "Any one would think that you was goin' to a picnic, or a fandango of some kind."

"Well, unless there is a picnic or fandango at Roaring Ranch they would be mistaken," replied Wild.

"Stingin' tarantulas! If Hank Hesper was to set eyes on you fellers he'd think you was real tenderfoots; an' then wouldn't he git fooled!"

"Who is Hank Hesper?" Jim inquired.

"Oh, he's the leader of a gang of renegades up at Riley's Run, which is about ten miles this side of my ranch."

"Ah!" exclaimed Wild; "so you have got a gang of 'bad men' close to you, have you? Are they real dangerous?"

"I reckon they are when they are a mind to be," was the retort. "They take it in their heads to make a haul on some one every now an' then, an' they always git away. Why, about a week afore I left home they held up a small wagon train an' cleaned it out, after killin' four men. They took all ther horses an' ther oxen, an' sent ther men what they didn't kill on ther run for Gobbler Town, which is a small settlement four miles to ther north of my grazin' grounds. Oh, Hank Hesper an' his gang of renegades kin about do as they please, I tell yer! There ain't been any one as could rout 'em, so far, an' a whole lot of us has tried."

Young Wild West was very much interested in what the ranchman said.

"Perhaps those who have tried to rout them out haven't gone about it in the right way," he said. "I'll warrant you that if Hank Hesper bothers me, or anything that belongs to me, he won't be allowed to run about with a free rein very long. I guess us fellows have attended to as hard cases as he is, haven't we, boys?"

"I reckon we have," replied Jack. "Look at Rob Runner an' Dancin' Dick an' Saffron Joe, an' Spotted Bill! They was what yer could certainly call hard cases—men who wasn't afraid of anything, an' could shoot with a steady hand."

"Well, I reckon they couldn't hold a patch to Hank Hesper," said Wal Wisp, shaking his head. "I guess you fellers had better not bother with his gang, if you should conclude to take ther ranch."

"Oh, we won't bother him so long as he don't bother us," and Young Wild West laughed as though it was a matter of very little importance, after all.

"I'm glad to hear yer say that. I don't want to bring you over in Wyoming to git killed. Hank Hesper never misses when he draws a shooter on a feller."

"I shall have to get acquainted with him, anyway."

The ranchman looked hard at him, but our hero never cracked a smile.

"Well, I guess we are all ready to go, ain't we?" asked Cheyenne Charlie.

"Yes," answered Wild. "I suppose we may as well go on; it is five minutes past two now, and we were going to leave at two."

The five then started without any further delay.

The trail they had to follow was not much of a one. It lay to the west of Weston and ran over the mountain range to the borders of Wyoming.

Wal Wisp said it was pretty level after about twenty miles the other side of the town, but pretty rough as far as that.

"We'll have to live on game principally," he said, "till we git to ther ranch. I've got a bag of hard-tack an' some salt."

"We will make out all right, I guess," observed Jim.

They rode along at a good pace and soon the town was left behind.

It was a part of the country that Wild was not very familiar with, as he seldom went in that direction when on a hunt for game.

But still he had been that way for a few miles on different occasions while prospecting.

The trail made by the herd of horses the ranchman had brought over would have been sufficient to show them the way if there had been no other marks to guide them.

About an hour before sunset Charlie brought down a fine young buck, so they cut off the best part of the meat and took it with them.

They meant to get as far as possible before going into camp, even if it was a little late.

All they needed was water and grass for the horses, as the weather was warm, and if it came to the point, it would not hurt them a bit to sleep in the open air.

When darkness overtook them they were in a very undesirable sort of camp, so they went right on.

"We'll strike a first-rate place inside of an hour," said Wal Wisp. "I kept a putty good eye on things when I come through."

He was right, for at the expiration of a quarter of an hour they came to a spot that was just suited to their purpose.

It was a level plateau that was well wooded, with plenty of succulent grass for the animals.

A miniature cascade trickled down the rocks to furnish them with water, and a wall of rock would furnish them a shelter from the cool night air of the mountain.

"I reckon this is about as good as we kin find," observed Cheyenne Charlie, as he dismounted and took a survey of the scene in the moonlight. "It is about as lonesome a place as a feller could find in a day's travel, though; but that don't count for much, as lonesome places are common in these mountains."

"That are true enough," nodded the ranchman.

Robedee always took it on himself to make the campfire on such occasions, and in a few minutes he had one going.

This gave a more cheerful aspect to the scene, and when the horses were tethered, our friends began to get their supper ready.

Jim thought he could spare a little of the supply of the coffee he had brought along, and this, with the venison and hard bread they were provided with, was bound to make an appetizing meal.

In less than half an hour it was ready, and then they did full justice to it, for their ride over the mountain had sharpened their appetites.

After supper Charlie, Jack and the ranchman lit their pipes and squatted before the fire Indian fashion, while Wild and Jim arranged a place to sleep.

They had not met a human being on the way, and they felt satisfied that they were not likely to be bothered by any.

But there were bears and catamounts to look out for.

Young Wild West never grew careless, no matter how safe things appeared to be, so when the time came to turn in for the night, he arranged the watch.

He and Jim were to stay on until midnight, Jack and Wisp till three, and Charlie the balance of the night.

This program was carried out, and nothing occurred to disturb them.

CHAPTER V.

RILEY'S RUN.

It was not long after sunrise the next morning when the five who were journeying to Roaring Ranch set out again.

"We'll be able to strike Riveley's Ranch by sunset to-night," said Wal Wisp. "We kin git a good feed there an' put up

for ther night. It is jist ther other side of ther border line."

"I did not know there was a ranch between this place and yours," Wild answered.

"Oh, yes; there's jist one ranch. When you see it you will say it's a putty good one, but it ain't up to ther one you have bought, not by a jugful!"

"I haven't bought it yet, you know."

"But you will, I'm sure. Wait an' see what you think of Riveley's place."

The traveling was pretty fair, and they made good time that day.

Late in the afternoon they met a solitary horseman bound for the hills they were leaving behind them.

He was prospecting, he said, and had started out with a comrade.

But while they had been going through a long, narrow defile, about half-way between two ranches on the trail, they had been beset by outlaws.

He had made his escape, but his partner had gone under.

"It was a hot fight for a while, and we both did our level best to get away, but my pard got shot, an' then my horse, which is a pretty fast runner, got me away," said he.

"I know ther gang what done that," said Wal Wisp. "It was Hank Hesper's crowd, an' ther place where they tackled yer was Riley's Run. They must be gittin' hard up for business when they tackle a couple of prospectors. Ginerally they go for bigger game."

"That means that we are likely to have trouble before we get to Roaring Ranch," observed Wild.

"We kin go another route by makin' it seven or eight miles more to travel," retorted the ranchman.

"Well, I don't think this Hank Hesper is going to make us travel any farther than we need to. If he tackles us he might be fooled. I'll make it a point to attend to his case right away the moment he shows his hand."

Our hero's partners nodded to show that they thought the same way.

"I am glad I ain't goin' your way," said the prospector. "I consider myself pretty lucky that I got off with a whole skin."

After a few minutes' more conversation he resumed his way and our friends started off in a smart gallop again.

Wal Wisp had very little to say during the next twenty miles of the journey.

It was quite evident that the meeting with the prospector had not served to make him feel easy.

He was afraid that the renegades that he had spoken of would hold them up.

But he did not want his four companions to think that he was a coward, so he did not advise taking the longer route, so Riley's Run would not have to be gone through.

He was right when he said they would reach Riveley's by night, for the sun was just setting when they came in sight of the ranch.

It was situated on a broad plain just a few miles from the foothills, and was quite a large place.

They found the gate of the stockade open, and with Wisp in advance, they rode in.

They were promptly met by two cowboys, who gave a welcome to the ranchman, and then looked curiously at the four partners.

"Young Wild West an' his three pards, of Weston, boys," he exclaimed by way of introduction.

Then the cowboys stared harder than ever at them.

It was evident that they had heard of Young Wild West, and seeing him before them with his three partners and dressed in such neat and handsome rigs, they were wondering what sort of fellows they were.

The chances were that they took them to be men lately graduated from tenderfeet.

"Can we get accommodations for ourselves and horses to-night?" asked Wild, not noticing the glances that were cast at them.

"Sartin sure. Come right on. The old man is in the house."

This was good enough an invitation for them to go ahead, so they did not wait for anything further.

A minute or so later they halted in front of a long, low building that was substantially built of logs and sawed timber.

A gray-bearded man, who had evidently spent the best part of his life on the plains, came out and greeted them in a cheery voice.

"Brought friends with yer, hey, Wal?" he said. "What did yer do with ther greaser that went over to ther hills with yer?"

"I left him in Weston," was the reply. "Riveley, this is Young Wild West, ther feller I took ther horses over to. He's come back with me to buy my ranch. The other three gents are his pards."

"Goin' to sell out, hey?"

"Yes; I'm goin' to locate in Weston an' try an' make my pile at diggin' out dust."

"An' Young Wild West is goin' to buy your ranch?"

"Yes, yer might say he has bought it. If it is as I represented it to be he is bound to take it, 'cause we have got writin' to that effect. Say, which is the biggest and best ranch, mine or yourn, Riveley?"

"Yours, of course," was the reply.

"You hear what he says. Now, Young Wild West, what did I tell you?"

"That is all right," answered Wild. "I'll see the ranch first. If it is what you said it was, it will be mine. We will wait till we get there. I never go back on a bargain I make with any one."

"That's right, young feller," spoke up the white-whiskered ranchman. "But I will say that if you are thinkin' of buyin' a ranch, Wal Wisp's can't be beat. There's only one thing agin it, that is that it is so near to Riley's Run."

"Oh, that don't scare him any," Wisp hastened to say. "He even says he would like to meet Hank Hesper."

"Well, my boy, I reckon you had better not wish for ter meet ther renegade scoundrel."

The old man spoke in a kindly tone as he said this.

"But if he does meet him, an' Hesper goes to cuttin' up he'll git ther surprise of his life," put in Wisp. "Young Wild West learned me a thing or two while I was in Weston. Why, what do you think, Riveley? He told me that while I was in Weston I would have to behave myself, and if I didn't, he'd make me!"

"An' what did you do?" remarked the old man, quizzically.

"I behaved myself."

Then there was a laugh all around.

"I reckon yer want yer supper," observed the old rancher. "Here, you, Mike! See to them horses, an' be mighty careful with 'em, too. These gents are goin' to stay all night with us."

Mike made his appearance almost instantly. He was a greaser and looked remarkably like Jose.

Wild tossed him a coin and the fellow thanked him very politely.

That meant that the horses would not want for a single thing.

Half an hour later our friends were called in to partake of a meal of chicken fried with salt pork, hot corn muffins, baked potatoes and tea.

Riveley had a way of providing substantial food to the travelers who happened to stop at his ranch.

That night they slept on corn-husk beds, which were comfortable, and when they arose early in the morning they were as fresh as could be.

"I like this," said Wild, as they were washing up for breakfast. "Ranch life is all right, I think."

"If you don't git too much of it," Charlie spoke up. "You would git tired of it inside of a month."

"I don't know about that."

"Well, I think so."

"I think I could stand it all right for a month," spoke up Jim.

"And so could I," chimed in Robedee.

A very substantial breakfast was furnished them a few minutes later, after which Wild paid the bill.

Riveley was very reasonable in his charges, and they all voted him to be a fine old fellow.

The horses were done eating and had been nicely groomed, so, mounting them, they proceeded on their way.

"We'll strike Riley's Run about three o'clock, by ther way we've been travelin'," remarked Wal Wisp. "After we git through ther Run we'll soon strike ther ranch."

"Good enough," answered Wild, who had made sure that his weapons were in first-class order before they started. "We will halt at noon to give the horses a little rest, and we can cook a bite to eat at the same time. There ought to be lots of game through here."

"So there is—any amount of it."

The trail now showed evidences of having been traveled over a great deal, though it was not till they had been riding a couple of hours that they met any one.

Then they struck a drove of cattle on their way to the ranch they had stopped at.

About a dozen cowboys were in charge of the drove, and they bade our friends good-morning in their rough way as they passed.

It was about an hour before noon that they came to a place where the trail forked off to the left.

"Which way now?" asked Young Wild West, bringing his sorrel steed to a halt and looking at Wal Wisp.

"Ther right fork leads through Riley's Run, an' is ther nearest," was the reply. "Ther cattle we met come this way—from ther left, though. You see that high ground there? Well, that lays atween Riley's Run an' this trail. After you git on a mile or two you can't cross over to ther trail, 'cause you'll be right in ther Run then, an' ther sides are so steep that nothing short of a goat could git out. If you say so, we'll go ther longest way. I've heard it said that 'ther longest way 'round is the shortest way home.'"

"No, we will go through Riley's Run. The traveling is just as good, is it not?"

"Oh, yes; it is better, if anything."

"I suppose you came by the longer route, didn't you?" queried Jim.

"You kin bet I did. I wasn't goin' to run ther risk of not gittin' ther two dozen horses over to you in Weston. Why, if I had come through ther Run ther chances are that Hank Hesper would have held us up an' took ther horses an' all ther money I had besides. There's no use runnin' risks like that, you know."

"That is so," Wild rejoined. "It would have been foolish in your case to have come that way. You and the greaser could have done little in keeping the horses, if the renegades wanted to take them. But with us it is different. We have no herd of horses, and I guess we will be able to take care of ourselves, even if the renegades do show up."

"Well, maybe we kin. If Hank Hesper does catch us all of a sudden, though, ther best thing we kin do is to act mild with him. If we go to shootin' he'll down ther whole five of us in no time."

"Maybe he will, and then maybe he won't," observed Jack.

"How many in ther gang is there?" asked Charlie.

"I reckon about twenty."

"Well, that ain't so many. We've won agin greater odds than that," ain't we, Wild?"

"Oh, yes."

Wal Wisp said no more, but shrugged his shoulders as though he did not like the outlook as Young Wild West led the way to the right toward Riley's Run.

Just then a flock of prairie fowl started in front of them, and all hands blazed into them, killing a dozen.

"I guess they will make a dinner for us," observed Robedee, as he dismounted to pick them up.

"They will go all right," nodded Cheyenne Charlie. "Next to young bear, I like prairie chicken."

The five now rode along slowly, picking the birds as they went.

When they had the feathers removed, they halted long enough to clean the fowls, and then pushed ahead.

They had now reached the narrow passage that led through the center of the hill.

It was a picturesque spot in some places and somber and uninviting in others.

About ten minutes to twelve by Wild's gold repeater the five came to a halt at a point where there was a spring of water and good fodder for their horses.

Robedee promptly kindled a fire at the side of the trail, and a few minutes later dinner was being cooked.

About one they had eaten and were ready to resume their journey through the Run.

They had just mounted when they heard the sound of approaching horsemen.

They were coming from the direction they were traveling, so, on the alert for anything that might turn up, Young Wild West and his friends remained seated in the saddle without starting their horses ahead.

The next minute a band of fierce-looking men came around a bend in the trail.

The instant the men saw the five they pulled their horses down to a trot.

The face of Wal Wisp turned pale, and looking at Young Wild West, he said in a whisper:

"It's Hank Hesper, as sure as guns!"

"All right," was the calm rejoinder. "I don't believe he will hurt us."

"How are yer, strangers?" called out the leader of the band,

as he halted his horse not over a dozen feet in front of our friends. "Where might yer be goin'?"

"We are headin' for Roarin' Ranch," replied Wal Wisp, putting on a bolder manner than Wild had expected him to. "I'm takin' some friends over with me to show 'em ther place."

"Ah! So you are, hey? Come to think of it, I know you now. You are Wal Wisp, one of ther meanest coyotes in ther country. Are yer friends mean like you are?"

"See here, Hank Hesper," spoke up Wild, "you have no cause to make any such remark as that. You don't know who or what we are. I will tell you one thing, though, we always mind our own business."

"You do, hey?" was the half angry retort, though the man did not make any sign of drawing a weapon. "An' yer know me, it seems. Who in blazes are you?"

"I am Young Wild West."

"Young Wild West, hey? Well, I don't know as I know you, or ever heerd of you. It strikes me that you are a mighty sassy boy, though. That's a fine horse you have there, an' I reckon you'll sell him to me putty cheap."

"An' I reckon I won't."

There was a peculiar glitter in the eyes of our hero, and no one but his intimate friends knew what it foreboded.

He was getting ready to take the renegade leader down a peg or two.

As he sat there in the saddle, the picture of ease and confidence, Hank Hesper certainly looked to be what Wal Wisp had described him to be—a cold-blooded, relentless villain.

To all appearances, he was enjoying himself just then, much the same as a cat enjoys playing with a mouse before she finally eats it.

"Oh, so you reckon you won't sell your horse, then?" he said, after a pause.

His followers were grinning like so many tickled school-children. It was great fun for them.

"No; I won't sell him."

"Then mebbe you'll give him to me."

"Oh, no."

"Well, I guess you will!" and up came his hand with a revolver in it.

CHAPTER VI.

OUR FRIENDS ARRIVE AT THE RANCH.

"Drop that shooter, Hank Hesper!"

This command from the lips of Young Wild West rang out sharp and clear.

Just how it was done the renegade leader did not know, but before he had raised his revolver to a level he found one directed at him.

"Thunder!" he ejaculated.

"No thunder about it. Do as I say!"

There was no mistaking the meaning of the command.

Hank Hesper had never been so badly deceived in his life. He whom he had taken for a harmless boy had suddenly developed into a regular lion.

Thud!

The revolver dropped to the ground, and an uneasy look shot from the eyes of the villain.

If he was astonished, his men were dumfounded.

There was almost a score of them, yet they were really in the power of Young Wild West and his partners, for Charlie, Jim and Jack had drawn their revolvers almost as quickly as their young leader had, and they were covering the bunch of villains.

"You are a fine specimen of manhood to go about the country threatening to take horses from their owners, are you not?" Young Wild West resumed. "I have heard about you, Hank Hesper, and I have a strong notion of dropping you dead from your horse."

"You're got ther drop on me, young feller," was the reply. "But as I haven't done anything to yer, I guess yer had better not shoot."

This was said in a very cool tone of voice—almost as coolly as our hero was speaking.

"You think I had better not shoot, then? Well, I won't. I never shot a fellow in my life unless it was a case of necessity, and as I can get along very well without doing it now, I will let you go this time. Now, then, I want you to command your men to ride past in double file, and the first one who looks behind will wish he had not. Tell them at once, or I may change my mind!"

"You hear what he says, boys," the villain said in a tone

that showed how sheepish he was beginning to feel. "Ride on past in double file, an' don't look behind."

A smile had begun to form on the face of Wal Wisp when he first realized that Young Wild West had the drop on the renegade leader, but now it broke into a broad grin.

It tickled the ranchman greatly to see the reckless band of robbers ride past as tamely as kittens.

"Well, I'll be jiggered!" he thought to himself.

"Tell the men to keep on going at a sharp trot, Hank Hesper!" Wild said.

"Keep right on goin' at a sharp trot, boys!" the baffled villain called out.

"And that you will catch up with them pretty soon," added our hero.

"An' I'll catch up with yer putty soon," repeated Hesper.

Wild's three partners were watching the renegades closely.

They had an idea that they might turn quickly and show fight.

But there were no such intentions in the heads of any of them, however.

They realized that the instant they attempted anything of that kind their leader would die.

And that is just what would have surely happened.

Wild did not watch the men at all.

He was keeping his eye on their leader, satisfied that all that Hank Hesper wanted was half a show to make him begin to shoot.

When the renegades were about a hundred yards distant the prince of the saddle said:

"Now, Mr. Hank Hesper, you may go!"

"All right," was the reply. "Thank you. We may meet again. If we do I will be ready for you."

"You don't want to be too sure of that. And," as the man started to leave, "you had better settle your worldly affairs before you try to draw a shooter on me again."

There was no reply to this, and the discomfited scoundrel galloped off to catch his friends.

"Now, then, boys," said Wild, "we had better make tracks through the Run. Those fellows may take it in their heads to come back and charge upon us. I am satisfied with my first meeting with Hank Hesper, if he is not."

The five did not hesitate another second, but at once galloped from the spot.

"Well, I'll be shot for a measly coyote!" cried Wal Wisp, when they had covered a couple of hundred yards. "I never seen anything like that afore, I didn't truly."

"There is only one way to handle such fellows as he is, and that is to keep cool," answered our hero.

"That ain't all, either," said the ranchman. "You've got to be quicker than greased lightnin', along with the coolness. Young Wild West, there ain't another man livin' like you are. Jest wait till I tell this to ther boys on ther ranch! Won't they be surprised! They won't hardly believe it when I tell 'em that we come through Riley's Run, even."

"It seems to me that Hank Hesper must, as you say, have things his own way around here," spoke up Jim Dart. "Why haven't you organized a vigilance committee long ago and cleaned the gang out?"

"That has been tried and failed a couple of times," was the reply.

"Well, if Wild buys your ranch, and we come over here to stay a while, you kin bet the renegades of Riley's Run won't last long."

"Not much!" exclaimed Jack Robedee.

Cheyenne Charlie simply grinned and nodded at what Jack said.

They were riding a pretty fair gait, though not nearly as fast as they could, and Wild was listening for sounds of pursuit.

But a mile was covered without his hearing any, and then he came to the conclusion that Hank Hesper had deemed it advisable not to follow them.

It was about three o'clock when they emerged from the gorge that had been nicknamed Riley's Run for some purpose or other, and Wal Wisp declared that he could not see the borders of his land.

The country was almost perfectly level at this point, and our friends took note of the fact that it appeared very fertile.

But the sight of his possessions did not cause the ranchman to change his mind one whit about selling out.

He kept right on praising the property and repeatedly remarked that it was a great bargain to any one who desired to go in the ranching business.

It was not Young Wild West's idea to buy the ranch for making money. He wanted it so he could run it and make it

pay its own expenses and at the same time use it for a place to come and live on for a change occasionally.

The further he rode toward the ranch the more he felt the desire for owning the property.

And Charlie, Jim and Jack were really becoming enthusiastic over it.

In a little while the long, low building came in sight.

The ranch was certainly very admirably situated, and was worth more than the one they had stopped at overnight.

The cattle could be seen grazing in the distance, and as they got a little nearer a herd of horses could be seen inside the stockade.

Wild said not a word until they reached the gate of the stockade.

Then he turned to the ranchman and observed:

"Mr. Wisp, you don't feel like backing out, do you?"

"No, siree!" was the quick rejoinder. "When I once makes up my mind to a thing I never changes it."

"Well, our deal is made, then."

"Good enough! I'm mighty glad to hear you say that."

"I am glad to be able to say it. I have seen enough to convince me that the ranch is all right."

"Well, to-morrer we'll ride over to Steuben an' fix ther whole thing. There's a feller what they call a justice of ther peace there, an' he knows all about drawin' up deeds an' sich like."

"Very well. To-morrow we will go, then."

"How far is Steuben from ther ranch?" queried Cheyenne Charlie.

"Only a little more'n six miles. Some of ther ranch land runs right into the place. Steuben ain't no sich town as Weston is, but it's got a grocery store an' a whisky-mill. Ther grocery store sells everything, an' ther whisky-mill sells rum an' sich, ther same as over in your town."

"Yes?" and our hero laughed, the others joining him.

As they reached the building that was occupied by the ranchman and his help, our friends took note of the fact that it was as substantially made as any they had ever seen.

Young Wild West nodded in a satisfied manner as he dismounted.

An elderly woman, who had Indian blood in her veins, came out to greet them.

She was the wife of his head man, so Wisp informed them, adding that she was "one of ther best cooks what ever made a cup of coffee."

Wild looked at Jim as much as to say, "Your precautions in regard to provender were unnecessary, it seems."

Jim knew what the glance meant, but he was not satisfied that he had been wrong in bringing along the few things he had stowed in the saddle-bags.

It might be that the woman did not have the right kind of beans to brew the coffee with.

Wal Wisp soon called a man and bade him take care of the horses.

Then he led them inside.

Everything was as neat as a pin, and the partners could not help from commenting on it.

"Liza," said the ranchman, calling the woman, "I have sold this shebang."

"You are going to leave here, Mr. Wisp?" she asked in surprise.

"Yes; I'm going to quit these parts for good. Here's ther young man what has bought me out. His name is Young Wild West, an' he's ther smartest an' best feller what you ever seen. Why, what do you think? He got ther best of Hank Hesper on ther way over!"

The woman looked at our hero and gave a nod of assent.

"He is honest and true," was all she said.

Wild noticed that her eyes were very piercing and that she was a keen observer.

She was one of the sort who are given to minding their own business, too; he could see that.

"Tell us the lady's name, so we may know how to address her," he said.

"Oh, Liza Spofford is her name. She's Aleck Spofford's, my foreman's, wife. You couldn't git a better couple to look after things for you, I'll bet."

"Well, Mrs. Spofford," and our hero turned to the woman, "it is true that I have bought this ranch, and I want to tell you right here that you and your husband are welcome to stay here at the same wages Mr. Wisp has been giving you. I have not seen your husband yet, but I will keep him on the recommendation of Mr. Wisp."

"Thanked, sir," she replied, with a happy smile that showed that she was somewhat relieved. "I'm sure Aleck will be

only too glad to stay, 'cause he's gettin' old now, an' can't find a job as handy as he used ter. As for myself, I'd hate to leave ther place. I've lived here ever since I was a young woman. You see, it was Mr. Wisp's father who built ther ranch, an' it was here that I come to live with my husband when we first got married. We had four children born to us here, but they are all dead, an' we are here yet."

The tears came into the dark eyes as she said this, and Wild quickly assured her by saying that the job was open as long as they desired to keep it.

Then Wisp took the four from Weston through the house, which did not take a great while, since the rooms it contained were not a great many, in spite of the ground it covered.

There was no furniture to speak of, but what was there was of the useful kind.

After making a complete survey of the building and what it contained, our friends went out to look at the lands and stock.

Of course they did not see all of either that day, but enough to convince them that it was a great bargain.

About six o'clock the cowboys began to drive the cattle into the stockade.

A great many were left outside, of course, where they ran almost wild, but Wal Wisp had always made it a point to take good care of his best stock, especially that which he bred from.

It was an interesting sight to see the hardy men of the plains, drive the cattle in.

There was a great knack about it, and it had taken considerable practise on their part for them to be able to do it.

Twice the number of greenhorns would not have got the cattle into the stockade in a day.

The cowboys in the employ of the ranchman were a rather rough-looking lot, but there was nothing vicious-looking about them, for all that.

The men were of all ages, from twenty-one to sixty-five, and as they rode into the enclosure they all stared hard at Young Wild West and his partners.

The new suits of buckskin they had on and the fancy trimmings caught their eye.

"Boys!" called out Wal Wisp, "line up in front of us here. I've got somethin' ter tell yer."

Wondering what was coming, the score of rough-riding cattlemen pulled their bronchos around and obeyed.

"I've sold ther ranch, boys," Wisp continued. "I've sold it to this young man here, who is Young Wild West, ther prince of ther saddle. Ther papers will be made out to-morrer mornin', an' then he'll take charge. I'm goin' to recommend you all as bein' good hands, an' if it is satisfactory to you an' him I suppose you'll hold your jobs."

"I'd like to hold mine," exclaimed the oldest man in the bunch, taking off his hat in a respectful manner and looking at Wild.

He was Aleck Spofford, the husband of the housekeeper.

"That's Liza's old man," Wisp said, turning to our hero.

"You may consider yourself hired, Mr. Spofford," Wild told him. "I have already had a talk with your wife, and I find that you both suit me; so you will continue, both of you, the same as heretofore."

All of the rest save two promptly signified their desire to stay, and when he had put down all their names he told them that they could.

"So you fellows don't want to stay, then?" the boy asked, looking at the two, neither of whom were past twenty-five.

"No, I reckon not," answered one of them, with something like a sneer. "I don't know as I want to work for a boy."

This answer, of course, nettled Wild.

His nature was one to be aroused quickly, and such an insult as that could not be withstood.

But he did not fly into a passion; on the contrary he remained perfectly cool.

"So that is your reason for not wanting to stay, is it?" he asked.

"Yes; that's ther reason."

"How about you?" and Wild looked at the other fellow.

"Well, I guess I'm about of ther same opinion as Dick is," was the rejoinder.

"Very well, then, you don't have to work for me; and to tell the truth, I wasn't very strongly impressed by your manner and looks, anyway. Mr. Wisp recommended you all, and I was going to keep you, if you wanted to stay, out of courtesy to him. Now that it is decided that you are going to quit, I want to tell you something before you go."

"Well, jest be a little careful what you do tell us, then," said the man who had first spoken.

"Better keep still, Dick," remarked Wal Wisp, with a warning shake of his head.

"What for?" was the quick retort. "I reckon I ain't workin' for nobody now, an' you don't s'pose I'm goin' to stand any sass from a boy like that—a feller who is lettin' his hair grow jest to make himself look like a hunter or cow-puncher, do you?"

"See here!" exclaimed Young Wild West, "you are altogether too impertinent. Just get off your horse, will you? When you go away from here you will be a little more civil, I think, for unless you apologize to me, I am going to thrash you!"

At this both the men broke into a loud guffaw.

"Git down an' see what he'll do, Dick," observed the second cowboy.

"Yes; and after I get through with him I will attend to you!"

Wild was ready for business now, and nothing would stop him from teaching the fellows a lesson.

"Do you want me to pull you from your horse?" he cried, advancing toward the one called Dick.

"Oh, no; I'll git off. Now what are you going to do about it?"

He was off almost instantly, and was stepping toward the young prince of the saddle.

For an answer Wild struck him a blow with his clenched fist that sent him reeling a dozen feet from the spot.

He followed him up like a flash and gave him another on the end of his nose which dropped him to the ground.

The fellow made a move to get up and grabbed for his revolver at the same time.

That was just what our hero expected him to do, and he was ready for him.

With astonishing quickness he kicked the revolver from the man's hand just as he got hold of it, and then stepped back to give him a show to fight it out.

With a cry of rage that sounded like the bellow of a bull, almost, the cowboy, who was a big, raw-boned fellow, made a rush at him.

The blood was streaming from his nose, and he made a ferocious picture as he dashed upon the agile boy to crush him in one swoop.

But he knew almost nothing about the art of boxing, and the next thing he knew a sledge-hammer blow caught him on the chest and sent him to the ground again.

"I told you I was going to thrash you, and I am going to keep my word!" said Wild. "I am going to make you cry 'enough,' and then make you apologize. Do you hear what I say?"

"I hear you!" screamed the man, who was now beside himself with rage. "I'll fix you for hitting me like that, see if I don't!"

He scrambled to his feet a little dazed, but strong as a lion, and drew his hunting-knife.

Then, much to the surprise of every one, Young Wild West drew his knife.

"Come on!" he exclaimed, "and look out for yourself! Just keep your heart covered, or when you go away from this ranch you will be carried! I mean business."

The knives clashed together, and the fight was on.

But it was one of the shortest fights on record, Wal Wisp said afterward, for with a dexterous move that no one could quite catch, Young Wild West sent the cowboy's knife flying from his hand.

Then his left fist shot to the fellow's jaw, and he went down like an ox.

That settled it, for he was rendered unconscious from the force of the blow.

"Get down off your horse," said Wild, turning to the other man. "Hurry, now, for I am getting hungry and want my supper."

"I—I—g-g-uess I don't want to fight you, young feller," was the rejoinder.

"Get down, I say!" thundered the prince of the saddle, whose blood was now up. "Get down or I'll fetch you down with a bullet!"

His revolver was in his hand as he spoke and, turning as pale as a sheet, the cowboy obeyed.

"Put up your hands, now," and back went the revolver to his belt. "I am going to thrash you, whether you want to fight or not. Put up your hands, for I am going to hit you right on the end of the nose."

There was nothing left for him to do but obey, so up went the man's hands in a defensive attitude.

He cut a ridiculous figure in the attempt, but it was the best he could do.

Spat! Wild's fist shot out and caught him just where he told him it would.

The fellow staggered back, and then following him up, our hero hit him in the stomach with his left, and sent him rolling on the ground, gasping like a dying pig.

By this time the other man had come to sufficiently to realize what had been going on, and as he raised himself on his elbow he found his young conqueror standing over him.

"I've got enough!" he cried. "I'll apologize, mister. Tell me what you want me to say."

"Well, you can say that you are sorry you insulted me; that will be sufficient."

"All right, boss. I'm sorry I insulted you; indeed I are!"

The tone of his voice implied that he spoke the truth, too.

"I'm sorry, too, boss," spoke up the other, as Wild cast a glance at him. "You are a regular tornado, an' you've learned me a lesson I won't never forget."

"Get up, the pair of you, and as soon as Mr. Wisp pays you what he owes you, I want you to get off this property."

Five minutes later the two cowboys, who were certainly a sick-looking pair, were making for the settlement as fast as their horses could carry them.

CHAPTER VII.

THE TRANSFER IS MADE.

"Mr. West," said Aleck Spofford, dismounting, "I should like to shake hands with you."

"All right, Mr. Spofford, it will be a pleasure for me to shake hands with you, and with all the rest, too," replied Wild.

All were eager for the opportunity, and for the next ten minutes the young rancher—for he could now be called such—was kept busy shaking hands and talking to them in his free-and-easy style.

Then the horn blew for supper, and all hands repaired to the long apartment that was used as a dining-room and sat down to one of Liza's beef stews, for which she was famous.

There was hot corn-bread, and coffee, too, which Jim Dart could not find a word of fault with.

Our friends made it a point to get thoroughly acquainted with the men that evening, and when they turned in Young Wild West was satisfied that they were a good lot, well adapted for the work they were engaged to do.

In spite of the fact that it was new to him, our hero put in a good night's sleep.

He got up early the next morning, before either of his partners were awake, and mounting Spitfire, took a ride around the property belonging to the ranch.

When he came back breakfast was ready.

"Where have you been?" Cheyenne Charlie asked. "We was beginnin' to git anxious about you."

"Oh, I was simply taking a little ride around to exercise my horse. I have been over the grounds pretty well."

"Well, how do you like things?" questioned Wal Wisp.

"Fine. I haven't a word of fault to find."

"Good enough. I'm glad you're satisfied with ther bargain we made."

"Oh, I am satisfied."

"And so am I."

"Then there is no complaint coming," said Jim Dart, with a laugh.

"I s'pose I'll have to gather up my clothes an' things an' light out putty soon," observed Wal Wisp a few minutes later.

"You can stay here as long as you have a mind to," Wild answered quickly. "I am not the one to become so mean that I am afraid of what one eats."

"I know you ain't; but I want to git to Weston as soon as I kin, you know. I am about as much interested in the property over there as you are in this here."

"I suppose you are."

"You ain't goin' to Weston till we go back, are you?" asked Robedee.

"That depends on how soon you are goin'," was the retort.

"Oh, we've got to git back inside of two weeks; leastwise, I have."

"Well, I guess I kin hang out that long."

"We will be ready to go back Monday morning, I think," said Wild. "That will give us four days here, and we ought to have everything running smoothly by that time."

"You won't have any trouble in ther runnin' of things while

"You're away, not so long as you leave Aleck in charge," Wal Wisp assured him.

"I feel pretty sure of that."

It was not long after breakfast that Wisp suggested that they go over to Steuben and settle the matter for good.

"All right," answered Wild; "but there is one thing that I can't do now."

"What's that?"

"I can't give you the cash I agreed to give you in addition to the property in Weston. I can't give you that until we get back home. But I can give you an order for it on the bank."

"You don't s'pose I thought you brung ther money over with you, do you? That part will be all right, so don't worry."

"Very well, then, nothing will stop the deal. We will ride over and see the justice and let him fix up the papers."

Spofford ordered their horses brought out, and a few minutes later they mounted and rode off to the north of the ranch. Of course, Charlie, Jim and Jack went along.

They wanted to see what sort of a place Steuben was.

The little village was only four miles distant, and it was not long before it came into view.

The village had been built in a clump of trees that had been standing on the level prairie like an oasis in the desert, and through which a rather wide brook ran.

It was a sort of headquarters for the herdsmen from the various ranches that were located within a radius of twenty miles or more.

This was quite enough to make it a decidedly warm place on certain occasions, such as pay days, holidays, etc.

When the five entered the little frontier village Wal Wisp led the way to the shanty-like structure where the justice of the peace held forth.

The door opened when a halt was made in front of the house, and a woman stuck her head out.

"If you are lookin' for ther judge, he is over in Bill Dill's mill," she said.

"All right," replied Wisp. "Come on, boys."

"How far is the mill?" Jim Dart asked.

"Right over there," was the retort, and he pointed it out.

"Oh," said Jim; "I see."

"There are more kinds of mills than one, you know," spoke up Wild, with a laugh.

The place Wisp pointed out to Jim was a saloon.

The boy laughed good-naturedly, the rest joining in.

But they rode over to the place and dismounted, though.

It was pretty early in the morning, but not so early that there was not a number of cowboys and some disreputable characters gathered there.

"Come on in," said the ranchman. "We'll find ther judge takin' his mornin' nip, I reckon."

There were half a dozen men standing on the rickety porch as our friends went inside, after tying their horses, and then they eyed them keenly, evidently wondering who it was that Wal Wisp, the rancher, was so friendly with.

They saluted Wisp with a respectful "good-morning," and then followed inside, to a man.

The judge was seated at a table with a bottle of liquor, a pitcher of milk and a glass before him.

"Mornin', judge," said Wal Wisp, walking over to the table.

"Good-mornin', Wal," was the reply, and then the man poured out a drink and swallowed it.

"I come over to see you on business this mornin'."

"Oh, did yer? Well, I'll attend to you as soon as I clean up ther milk that's in ther pitcher."

At this retort Wild and the others turned from the judge and took a look at the others who were in the place.

Almost the first ones their eyes rested upon were the two men who had left the ranch the night before, after being thrashed by the young prince of the saddle.

They had evidently been spending their wages over the bar recklessly, as they were very much under the influence of liquor.

And they had imbibed just enough to make them ugly, and, at the same time, to put some false courage in them.

The fellow called Dick scowled fiercely when Wild looked at him, but said nothing.

The other man appeared to be more at his ease, for, with a forced smile, he said:

"Hello, Young Wild West, how do you feel this mornin'?"

"Very well, thank you. How do you feel?"

"Bully; never felt better in my life."

At the mention of the name of Young Wild West two or three of the inmates of the room crowded toward our hero.

They had heard of him before, and were anxious to get a good look at him.

The boy had a reputation near and far, it seemed.

The cowboy was inclined to be talkative, but his companion took him by the arm and pulled him back to the bar, a proceeding that Wild did not fail to note.

Dick was getting ready to do something!

Our hero was sure of it.

And his "doing something" probably meant that he would take a shot at the boy who whipped him so thoroughly the night before.

But if he had an idea that he was going to catch the prince of the saddle napping, he was very much mistaken.

The cowboy was anything but a shrewd fellow, and the only tactics he could use were those he had seen and learned from some one else.

Wal Wisp walked to the center of the room, and in a loud voice exclaimed:

"Boys, I've sold my ranch to Young Wild West. Come up an' have somethin'."

"That was sufficient to make every one interested, and the crowd lined up as if by magic.

Even the judge left his whisky and milk, and got up from the table.

"What did I hear you say, Wal?" he asked.

"I've sold my ranch."

"Who to?"

"Young Wild West, the only feller that took ther starch out of Hank Hesper."

This remark caused more surprise than ever.

"You don't mean it!"

"Yes, I do mean it. But what are you goin' to have, judge?"

"I'll take a cigar with you."

"That's it. Ther same old trick. You always buy your own whisky an' get your cheroots when somebody treats. Judge, you've got a great head, an' there's no mistake about it."

"If I didn't have a pretty good head I wouldn't be a justice of ther peace, would I?"

The man spoke with a feeling of pride when he said this.

"No; sartin you wouldn't."

The drinks and cigars were now on the bar, so without any further talk the crowd helped themselves.

Then Wisp thought about introducing our friends to the judge, and he did so.

"Is it a fact that you got ther best of Hank Hesper?" asked the judge, looking at our hero with an admiring glance.

"Well, yes. He started in to have some fun with us while we were coming through Riley's Run. He was going to take my horse from me, but I wouldn't let him. I made him drop his shooter and hold up his hands. My friends here had the drop on his gang, and we made them ride off double file after I got through talking to Hesper. If he had not done as I said he would have been a dead man."

"Well, well!"

"That's true, every word of it, for I was there," spoke up Wal Wisp.

"How is it that you brought 'em through Riley's Run?" asked the man who kept the place.

"I didn't want to, but Young Wild West would come that way, anyhow. He said he wanted to meet Hank Hesper an' his gang, an' he did. I tell yer, boys, it was wonderful to see how simple Hesper looked when he found he had to do as he was ordered. It made me laugh."

This from one who had been very badly scared at the time caused Cheyenne Charlie to look at Jim Dart and Jack Robedee and wink.

Some of the men saw this, and then they nodded approvingly.

The most of them knew Wal Wisp pretty well.

There was some more talk on the subject, and then, just as the judge said he was ready to go over to his office and draw up the necessary papers to make the transfer, a pistol shot rang out in the room.

It was the fellow Dick who had fired it, and he had intended the bullet for Young Wild West.

He was standing close to our hero at the time, and he had no idea that he was being watched.

But just as he pressed the trigger of the weapon the hand of the prince of the saddle knocked it upward, and the bullet found lodgment in the ceiling.

A quick wrench and a blow straight from the shoulder, and the cowboy lay on the floor, his pistol being in the left hand of Young Wild West.

It happened so quickly that those in the room could scarcely believe their senses.

The fellow's companion, who had started for the door, raised his revolver to take a shot at Wild, but before he could get it high enough Jack Robedoe laid him low with a bullet.

Then the greatest confusion prevailed.

The two cowboys had plenty of friends there, it seemed, and they were for having revenge.

Pistols and knives flashed in almost every part of the room.

"Gentlemen!" exclaimed Young Wild West, in a ringing tone, "that man I knocked down tried to shoot me down in cold blood, and because I stopped him from doing so his friend thought he would take a shot at me. He got what he deserved, and I want to tell you plainly that the first man among you who attempts to level his shooter will get the same!"

These words had considerable effect, for about half the men who had drawn them put their pistols back in their belts.

At this juncture Dick attempted to rise to his feet.

"Stay right where you are!" cried Wild. "If you make a move to get up again I will put a hole through you!"

The villain remained perfectly still then.

Our hero now walked over to him, and taking him by the collar, jerked him to his feet as easily as though he had been a child.

Then facing him toward the door, he kicked him clean through it.

"The next time I meet you I am going to drop you, you cowardly hound!" he cried.

Dick did not stop to hear any more, but made for his horse and rode off.

Wal Wisp went outside, along with some others, to see where he went.

The next minute he came back, and running up to Wild, said:

"I'll be jiggered if he didn't meet ther greaser I had with me over in Weston out there, an' ther pair have gone off together."

"Well, let them go," was the reply. "We won't bother them, so long as they don't bother us."

"That's ther way to talk," called out the judge. "Three cheers for Young Wild West, boys! He's as white as snow, an' a host in himself!"

That settled the business as far as any show of animosity toward Wild and his partners was concerned.

There was not a man in the place who did not join in the cheer that went up, and as soon as it had subsided the judge did something he had never been known to do before.

He ordered the landlord to give all hands what they wanted at his expense.

Some friends took care of the man Jack had shot in the meantime, and then things went along about the same as they had been going before the treacherous Dick had tried to shoot Wild.

Before they went over to the judge's office to fix up the transfer of the ranch property, Young Wild West once more faced the crowd and said:

"Now, then, boys, I am going to ask you to do me a favor."

"What is it?" some one asked.

"I want you all to take a cigar with me. It don't make any difference whether you smoke or not; you can give the cigar to some friend if you don't want it yourself. I don't drink anything strong, but I do smoke occasionally, and I want you all to smoke with me this time."

There was not one who demurred, so the cigars were passed around, after our hero had told the landlord to put out the best he had in the house.

Then they went over to the office with the judge and the transfer was duly made.

It was now Young Wild West's ranch.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE RENEGADES.

It will be in order for us to now turn to the greaser who had told Young Wild West that he was going to kill Wal Wisp.

As has been stated, Jose was part Indian and part Mexican, and that made him both crafty and vengeful.

He had long hated the man he worked for, but that day at Weston when Wisp had kicked him because he had failed to rob the untamed room cell, he had broken out.

Had it not been for Young Wild West he would surely have made an attempt on the rancher's life that night, when he was caught lying in wait outside the Casino Hotel.

The greaser had promised Wild to go away, after a whole lot of persuasion, and he had done so.

But he had not given up his idea of getting square.

He would never give it up until he succeeded or died himself.

He was hanging about Weston when he saw his late boss and the four partners set out for Roaring Ranch.

Then Jose started to follow them, hoping to get a chance to accomplish his purpose before they reached their destination.

He was careful not to get too close to them, for he had seen and heard enough of Young Wild West to know that he was not following ordinary travelers.

They would be apt to find him out very quickly, if he allowed himself to get within sight of them.

So he contented himself with following their trail a mile behind them, vowing vengeance on them as he rode along.

When they went into camp that night he paid several visits to their immediate vicinity, but each time he saw no chance to get at the man he had sworn to kill.

And so it continued until at length, as he was riding through Riley's Run, he came face to face with Hank Hesper and his gang of renegades.

This was the very thing Jose wanted to happen.

He felt that if he could only become a member of the villainous band he would surely have a chance to get his revenge.

It was not over ten minutes after Hank Hesper's humiliating experience with Young Wild West when Jose came upon him.

The villain was in anything but a pleasant frame of mind and his first impulse was to shoot the greaser.

But he suddenly recognized him as belonging to Roaring Ranch. It occurred to him that it would be a good idea to take him a prisoner.

"Hands up! you ugly-looking varmint!" he called out, covering the man with his revolver.

Jose obeyed smilingly.

"What are yer grinnin' at, yer greaser?"

"Me glad to meet Hank Hesper," was the reply. "Me want to meet him, 'cause me want to kill Wal Wisp an' burn his ranch."

"Ah! So that's yer game, is it? If yer wanted to kill Wal Wisp why didn't yer do it afore this? He's jest gone on ahead of yer. I s'pose yer know."

"Yes; me know, but Young Wild West no let me kill him. He say I get killed if I do."

At the mention of the name of the young prince of the saddle the face of the renegade captain clouded.

"So Young Wild West wouldn't let you kill him, hey?" he said. "Do you know this Young Wild West, greaser?"

"Yes; me know him. Me take horses with Wal Wisp to him. Boss kick me, an' when I try to stab boss he no let me. Then when Wal Wisp go to shoot me he no let him. Young Wild West great smart young man. He best man I ever see!"

"He is, hey? What's your name, greaser?"

"Me Jose."

"All right, Jose, you kin come along with us, if you want to. I want to talk to you a bit."

"Me glad to come, 'cause me no dare to go where Wal Wisp see me, or he shoot."

"Well, mebbe I'll fix it so you kin go where he is an' he won't shoot. How about that?"

"Good!"

"Come on, then."

The band had been at a halt while this conversation was taking place, and the captain now started ahead again.

"We will go in by ther eastern entrance to-day, boys," he said.

Some of the evil-faced men looked at each other knowingly.

They were well aware of why they were to go in by the eastern entrance.

Young Wild West had been the means of it.

It was the first time they had ever seen any one get the drop on their leader, and as he was a domineering fellow, some of them secretly rejoiced over it.

But they feared him too much to make any remarks about it.

The renegades rode forward at the command of Hank Hesper who rode with the greaser on his side.

They proceeded along for perhaps a quarter of a mile and then came to a halt again.

After shading his eyes and looking up and down the narrow cut through the hill, the villainous leader of the band rode right up to the wall of earth and rock and seized hold of a big bunch of clinging vines which he quickly threw aside, disclosing an opening large enough for a horse and rider to pass through.

Bending over the horse's neck, he rode through, and then came the greaser, with a look of wonder on his face, followed by the members of the band, one at a time.

When the last man had gone through the heavy cluster of vines dropped back into place, and the way through the narrow place looked the same as before.

No one would have thought of such a thing as there being a way to get out of the Run anywhere around there.

But this was one of the two ways the outlaws had of getting to their headquarters.

This was what was called the eastern entrance, and was little used.

The main way of getting in and out was about a mile to the west of the spot where Young Wild West and his friends had met the renegades.

The entrance was through a crooked, narrow brook that was fed by a waterfall less than a hundred feet from the trail.

The water tumbled over a ledge, and it was right beneath this that the renegades rode into the passage that led into a rather broad hollow that was filled with caves.

Like the other, it would be difficult for one to find a way to get in, unless they had been posted exactly what to do.

But to return to the villainous band.

The renegades must have ridden a trifle over half a mile when they entered the deep hollow where the caves were.

But before they got there, however, Hank Hesper saw to it that Jose had taken an oath that was as horrible as it was binding that he would never divulge the secret entrance he had come through, and that he would always obey the orders given him by the captain.

The penalty was death by torture.

Hesper was pretty good at studying character, and it did not take him more than a minute after meeting the greaser to see that he was one who would make a good member of his villainous band.

He was just the one to do the sneak acts for them, though he was not one who would prove much of a fighter in a hand-to-hand contest.

His way of fighting was to stab a man in the back, unless thoroughly aroused, as he had been when Wal Wisp kicked him.

When the majority of the renegades had gathered in one of the larger of the caves Hank Hesper called the greaser over to him.

"So your name is Jose, is it?" he said.

"Yes," was the answer.

"An' yer want to stick Wal Wisp?"

"Yes."

The eyes of the halfbreed flashed dangerously as he said this.

"Well, I want to put ther finish to Young Wild West."

Jose shook his head.

"What's ther matter? Young Wild West ain't your friend, is he?"

"He save my life when he not let Wal Wisp shoot me."

"Yes, an' if you was to shoot ther rancher he'd drop you as quick as lightnin'. Don't you know that it wouldn't do for you to kill Wisp while Young Wild West is livin'? He knows you want to stick him, an' as soon as you done it he would find you an' shoot yer in no time. Young Wild West an' them fellers that went through Riley's Run with him have got to go under, as well as ther rancher. That's ther only way out of it."

"Yes," nodded the greaser, giving right in to Hesper, because he thought he was right.

"Well, Jose, you kin have your revenge an' I kin have mine, while at ther same time we kin do a lot of business. We will rob and burn Wal Wisp's ranch at ther same time."

"Good!" cried Jose.

"An' we'll run a few head of cattle here, so's we can have fresh meat when we want it."

"That's so. Me like some fresh meat now; me hungry."

"To tell ther truth, there ain't much of anything to eat around here jest now; but I'll see what I kin do for yer. I say, Baldy! Git us somethin' to eat, will yer?"

The man called Baldy was the duly appointed cook for the gang, and he hastened to reply that he would attend to their wants at once.

In about half an hour he called them to a meal of very tough beef, corn cakes that were as heavy as stones, and a quantity of half-baked potatoes.

This was plenty good enough for Jose, if it was not for the captain, and he put it away as though he had eaten nothing for several days.

"We ain't got a bit of coffee," said Hesper, "an' we've got to have some afore long. I kin tell yer! I likes my coffee, an' to go without it ain't ther right thing. I'll send some one over to Stenben ther first thing in ther mornin' after some, an' a couple of you must go out an' git hold of a steer afore sunrise."

Though the headquarters of the renegades was secret and pretty secure from prying eyes, it was not fitted up anything to speak of.

They scarcely had cooking utensils enough, and the majority of the men slept upon heaps of leaves.

Every one of them gloried in the life they were leading, though, and nearly all of them were wanted somewhere for some crime or other.

A price had been put upon the head of Hank Hesper over a year previous in Nebraska.

That was why he had come to Wyoming.

And since he had been there he had been successful in his villainous calling.

Jose was treated well by the men because their leader told them to treat him that way.

Hesper had decided to raid the ranch he thought still belonged to Wal Wisp, and he knew that the greaser would be a great help in accomplishing it, as he knew every inch of the ground and just how things were located there.

He could point out where the men slept, and that was the main thing, for the villains knew they would have to quiet the rancheros before they would be able to do much plundering.

The band remained quietly in their snug retreat that night.

But about four in the morning two men rode out, each equipped with a lasso.

They were the ones Hesper had appointed to go and steal a steer from one of the many herds they would be apt to find on the prairie.

If they could not succeed in driving the steer in they were to slaughter it and bring back as much of the meat as they could carry.

Or, if they had luck enough, they were to drive two or more in.

About six o'clock the two came back with a single steer.

The noise caused by their arrival aroused Hesper.

He got up and gave a grunt of satisfaction when he saw the steer.

"Slaughter ther critter an' hang some of ther meat up, so's it will be fit to eat for dinner," he said.

Then he went to look for the greaser.

"I guess I'll send him to Steuben for some coffee," he thought. "He is known over there, an' they'll think he's from Roarin' Ranch."

Jose was sound asleep, but a not over-gentle kick in the ribs aroused him very quickly.

"Come, Jose!" exclaimed the captain. "I want you to go to Stenben an' git ten pounds of ther best coffee they've got in ther store. Hurry up, now! You'd oughter been off an hour ago."

"Me go—yes, me go. Wal Wisp no be there," replied the greaser.

"Of course he won't be there," said Hesper. "You go an' git ther coffee an' have it charged to Wisp. He runs an account at ther store, don't he?"

"Yes; he pay every month."

"Well, that's all right, then. You kin work it very fine, 'cause they think you are workin' for Wisp yet."

"That so," and the greaser grinned, as though he thought that would be the first start of the revenge he wanted upon the ranchman.

It did not take him long to saddle and bridle his horse, and then, without any breakfast, he set out for Steuben.

It was not a great distance off, so he would not be a very long time in getting there.

When he came in sight of the place he met two horsemen, whom he promptly recognized as men belonging to Roaring Ranch.

They were the two Young Wild West had handled so roughly the night before, and when they saw Jose they greeted him heartily and gave him a drink from a bottle one of them had.

"We know all about yer, Jose," said the one called Dick. "We are out of ther ranch, too. We've been stoppin' down here in town all night, an' we are tryin' to think of some way to down this boy they call Young Wild West. Take another drink: you are welcome to it."

Jose took the drink all right, but he refused to tell them where he was hanging out.

As bad at heart as he was, he did not forget the obligation he had taken.

It was quite some time before he could get rid of the two, but when he finally did, and saw them go into the saloon he rode over to the store.

As there were some customers there ahead of him, he could not get waited upon right away.

But his turn came in time, and then he had no difficulty in getting the ten pounds of coffee and having it charged to Wal Wisp.

The greaser was just going out with the package when he saw his former employer and Young Wild West and his partners ride past and halt in front of the saloon.

As anxious as he was to take the life of Wal Wisp, Jose turned deathly pale when he saw him.

He was afraid that his time had about arrived.

But he waited until the five entered the place, and then, greatly relieved because Wisp had not recognized his horse, he went out and rode away.

Jose was so much agitated that he had not gone but a short distance when he let the bag of coffee fall.

The bag bursted and about half its contents were spilled on the ground.

He dismounted and proceeded to scrape up the coffee as best he could, knowing that he would incur the displeasure of Hank Hesper if he left any of it.

He had just got the bag tied up, and was in the act of mounting when the cowboys came riding up to him.

CHAPTER IX.

THE RENEGADES READY FOR THE ATTACK.

"Go ahead!" called out Dick. "I've just got my orders to light out, an' I'm doin' it."

Jose did not want to tell him that he did not want to have any company, so he said nothing, but mounted and started off.

The cowboy soon overtook him.

"Where are you goin'?" asked Jose.

"Over to Riley's Run. I've got a camp there," was the reply. "I'll go with you. I don't dare to show up around here any more. Poor Tom got shot jest now, and Young Wild West came pretty near fixin' me. I don't know jest why he let me go, an' I'll bet he'll be sorry that he did, for I'll lay for him till I git a chance to knock him over, as sure as I live."

The greaser was at a loss what to say, but he concluded to go right ahead and trust to luck.

"What yer got in ther bundle?" asked Dick, a couple of minutes later, as they were riding along side by side.

"Coffee," replied Jose.

"Is all that coffee?"

"Yes."

"What yer goin' to do with so much coffee?"

Again Jose was puzzled.

His head was too thick for him to concoct a falsehood that would be believed, anyway, so it was just as well that he did not tell one.

"Me can't answer what you want to know—not now," he said. "You no dare to come back to Steuben, you say; what you do, then?"

"I don't know. I'll tell you what I'd like to do, though."

"What?"

"I'd like to meet Hank Hesper an' git him to take me in his band."

The face of Jose lighted up, and Dick wondered what made it.

Then the cowboys related what had occurred since Young Wild West came over and bought the ranch from Wal Wisp.

The greaser was surprised when he heard that his former boss had sold out.

"I kill him before he get to Weston," he said.

"That's right!" exclaimed Dick. "I'll help yer do it, 'cause he is ther cause of gittin' me drove out of town. I tried to kill Young Wild West a little while ago, as I said, but he got ther best of me. I guess between ther two of us, we'll be able to fix 'em both."

"Yes; we fix 'em."

They rode on talking in this strain until Jose realized that he was getting pretty close to the waterfall, where the entrance was.

The only thing he could think of doing was to rein in his horse.

"What's ther matter?" asked Dick.

"You wait here until I come back," was the reply, in an earnest tone. "Jose will come back in fifteen minutes, sure."

"What do yer want me to wait for?"

"You wait, that's all."

"All right. Seein's you're so set about it, I will. Go ahead an' don't be long about it, either."

"Me come back in fifteen minutes, sure."

At this the greaser galloped from the spot, leaving the cowboy puzzling his brains to try and think of what it all meant.

"I reckon he's tellin' ther truth," he muttered. "Well, I'll wait, anyhow."

The time passed slowly, but it was inside of fifteen minutes when Jose suddenly appeared riding up the trail.

"Why, where did you come from?" asked the cowboy, when he drew up alongside him and came to a halt.

"You say you want to join Hank Hesper's band?" answered the greaser, ignoring the question.

"Yes. Why?"

"You let me tie hands and cover eyes, and you go to Hank Hesper. He say you kin come, but you must do as I say."

"All right, Jose, I'll do as you say. Go ahead!"

"Come this way, then."

The greaser led the way to within a few paces of the stream of water.

Then he came to a halt.

"Put hands behind you," he said.

After a little hesitation Dick obeyed.

Jose was all prepared for him, for he pulled out some strong twine, and soon had the man so he was rendered helpless.

Then he produced a dirty pocket handkerchief and tied it tightly over his eyes.

"You now see?" he asked.

"No," was the reply.

"Then you let me take bridle. Your horse follow me."

The cowboys showed signs of being rather uneasy, but he said nothing, and the next minute his horse was being led forward.

The greaser led him past the entrance and then back before he rode into the water.

Up the brook and under the waterfall he led his blindfolded companion, and a few seconds later he was in the little valley.

"Where are we now?" questioned Dick.

"You see in a minute," was the answer.

In just about that length of time a voice exclaimed:

"Halt! Who comes there?"

"It is the man who wanted to see you, captain," Jose answered, quickly.

The next thing the cowboy knew he was seized and dragged from his horse.

But he did not utter a cry, as it struck him instantly that the renegade was simply trying his nerves.

"Another of Wisp's men, hey?" observed the captain, a moment later. "All right. Fetch him into the cave."

Jose dismounted, and taking the blindfolded man by the shoulder, conducted him to the cave that the villain called his private headquarters.

Once there, he was asked a whole lot of questions, which Dick readily answered to his full satisfaction.

Then he administered the oath to him, after which the blindfold was removed and his hands untied.

"You will do, I reckon," Hank Hesper said. "Now, then, we'll strike while ther iron is hot. We'll raid Roarin' Ranch to-night, an' if Young Wild West has bought it, as you say, he'll never have any use for the buildin's on it, even if we don't wipe him off ther earth. We'll burn every piece of wood that belongs to ther place."

The eyes of the cowboy glistened when he heard this.

"We must try an' put ther finishin' touches to Young Wild West," he said. "I'm bound to kill him, if I kin."

"Well, so am I," retorted Hesper. "I reckon his chances are putty slim."

During the day the renegades made preparations for the raid.

It was to be one of the biggest undertakings, and they wanted to make a sure thing of it.

It was settled that Jose and Dick were to lead them to the place where the men slept in the ranch, and then the slaughter would begin.

It could be done easily, so the two who had joined the band within the past two hours said.

The men feasted on the meat of the steer and drank plenty of whisky that afternoon.

When night came they were rather sluggish from the effects of their feed, but they were anxious to make the raid, and as reckless as they could be.

They knew that they would find lots of booty at the ranch. The raid was to be made early the next morning, and the villains were anxious for the time to come.

It lacked but a few minutes to six when the renegades, twenty-three in number, with Hank Hesper riding at their head, rode out through the brook to the trail leading through Riley's Run.

It was broad daylight, with just the least vestige of a breeze blowing.

"We're goin' to have luck, boys," said Hesper. "I kin read it in ther breeze."

"Good!" exclaimed several of them in unison.

"You fellers, Jose and Dick, if you do your parts right to-day, your fortunes is made. Understan' that?"

"Yes," answered Dick, while the greaser gave a nod.

"You think yer kin lead us right to where we want to go without them knowin' that we are comin'?"

"Me lead you all right," answered the greaser.

"An' so will I," chimed in Dick. "I know every hole an' corner in ther place."

"Well, then, after we put 'em all to sleep we'll take all ther stuff that we kin carry, an' then set fire to everything that will burn. Understan'?"

"Yes."

"An' we'll take all ther cattle we kin drive away with us, an' some of ther horses."

"Ther cattle an' horses are branded, though," remarked the cowboy.

"Well, that don't make any difference, as far as ther cattle is concerned. We'll kill them as we want ter eat 'em."

"An' ther horses?"

"Well, mebbe we better not take any of them."

"I think that will be ther best way. We could shoot some of them, though, so's they won't never do anybody else any good."

"You're right," cried the villainous leader of the renegades. "You've got a putty good head on yer, an' I'm glad I met yer."

"So am I glad that I met you. I hadn't any idea that Jose belonged to your crowd when I told him I would like to meet you an' git you to take me in your band."

"You hadn't, hey?"

"No."

"Well, that seems funny, doesn't it? You was wishin' to jine my gang all ther time, an' you was bein' led right along where you could have ther chance to do it."

"Yes; I'm glad."

"So am I."

That is the way Hesper and the cowboy kept it up for a long time.

When they neared the stockade they settled down to business and became cautious.

Pretty soon they dismounted, and then Jose and Dick led them afoot to a weak spot in the stockade.

They had but little trouble in getting through, and then like so many shadows they crept toward the house.

CHAPTER X.

CONCLUSION.

As soon as the business was fixed up Wal Wisp got into e humor to have some fun before he went back to the ranch.

While Young Wild West was anxious to get back there, so he could see about inaugurating some changes, he did not want to spoil the ranchman's fun.

He knew that the man wanted to get full of whisky, and thus have his fun, but he made up his mind that he would keep him from drinking too much.

The judge was already pretty well under the influence of what he had imbibed, and when Wisp asked him over to Bill Dill's mill again he readily accepted the invitation.

Our friends went with them, as might be supposed.

"Ther feller what got shot a little while ago is ther first one to step off that way around here in over three weeks," observed the judge, as he led the way into the saloon. "I guess he was a bad one, though I never heard anything wrong about him before."

"But you seen what he did this mornin', though, didn't you?" spoke up Wal Wisp.

"Oh, yes; I happened to be lookin' at ther time he was goin' to blaze away at our young friend here. He was nipped jest in time, I must say."

"I was watchin' him pretty closely," said Jack. "That's part of my business when I'm out with Young Wild West, you know."

"You all understand your business pretty well, it seems."

"They are all rip-stavers from Weston!" cried the ranchman. "Give us ther best in ther house, landlord. Ther deal is made—all signed, sealed an' delivered, an' Young Wild West is now ther owner of Roarin' Ranch. Whoopee! Whoopee! Everybody drink but ther lame coyote what got shot an' ther one what run away. Ther judge will take rum an' milk, I'll take mine straight, an' ther rest kin take what they please."

"Well, I'll take a cigar," said Wild, laughing at the man's rather comical way of getting it out.

"If you like a temperance drink I've got some spruce beer," observed the landlord. "I forgot about it when you was in here before. It's a good drink to quench your thirst, and a barrel of it wouldn't have no more effect on you than so much water."

"Let's try it. I guess I don't want to drink a barrel of it, though, no matter how mild it is."

Jim called for the same, and then Charlie and Jack thought they had better, too.

It was really a good drink, and our hero could tell at the first sip that there was not a drop of alcohol in it.

As soon as the glasses were empty Wisp ordered them to be filled again.

He was taking awful "corkers," as Jack said, and Wild took him gently by the arm and whispered in his ear:

"Go it a little mild, old man. We don't want to carry you home, you know."

"My horse will do that," was the reply, in a good-natured tone. "Don't be alarmed; I kin stand a whole lot of Bill Dill's rum, 'cause he don't spare ther water when he fixes it up."

This was said in a loud voice, and caused everybody to laugh, even to the landlord himself.

He did not care how much Wisp joked at his expense, so long as he let his money come over the bar.

That is the way of the world.

Though Wild did his best to keep him straight, without using forceful language, he could not hold the man.

He took smaller drinks, but he took them often.

"I've sold my ranch, an' I'm goin' to celebrate it," he exclaimed. "So don't try to stop me—please don't."

The result was that when noon came around Wal Wisp had to be lifted on his horse to go home.

The judge was sound asleep in the back room, and many of the men who had filled up at the ranchman's expense were acting more like beasts than anything else.

"Now," said Wild, "we have a job on our hands that I don't like. What we have seen this morning at Steuben ought to be a temperance lesson to any one who is affected with the drink habit."

"That's right," replied Jim. "That judge is enough to disgust a pig; the way he swallows the fiery stuff mixed with milk is really sickening, and the way he acts after he gets intoxicated is worse still."

Charlie and Jack, who had taken some whisky themselves, said nothing.

They thought the remarks were intended for them, though.

It took them quite a long time to get back to the ranch, as one of them had to keep hold of Wisp continually to keep him from falling from his horse.

When they did get there they put him to bed.

That night when all hands turned in he was still sleeping soundly.

And he slept right on till daybreak.

Then Wisp arose with a raging thirst.

He got up and went to get some water.

He was just about to open the door to go out to the well

when, happening to glance through the window, he saw a score of forms creeping stealthily toward the house.

The man forgot that he was thirsty instantly.

With remarkable quickness he ran to where Young Wild West and his partners lay sleeping.

Catching Wild by the shoulder, he exclaimed in a hoarse whisper:

"Git up—quick. The house is goin' to be attacked!"

Our hero sprang to his feet almost instantly.

He seized his ever-ready rifle and then aroused his companions.

They had just got up when Wild heard the window in the further end of the room rattle as though some one was trying to raise it from the outside.

It was well for them that they did so, for two seconds later a volley was fired through it, and two of the cowboys fell to rise no more.

Young Wild West hastened to the door, and throwing aside the bar, opened it, regardless of the consequences.

In the morning light he could see a group of men with rifles leveled at the window.

Then his trusty rifle began to speak, and before he had fired three shots, Cheyenne Charlie had joined in.

Jim and Jack had joined in the shooting from the door now, and the scoundrels began dropping right and left.

In less than a minute from the time the first shot had been fired the raiders were beating a hurried retreat.

Some of them were making for the cover of the stable, and without the least hesitation, Young Wild West darted from the house and went after them.

He thought of Spitfire.

Cheyenne Charlie was right at his heels.

The raiders did not stop at the stable, but made for a break in the stockade a little distance behind it.

As our two daring friends got behind the stable one of the three men who were running that way turned and began emptying his revolver at them.

Wild and Charlie had only their rifles with them, as they had not taken time to pick up anything else; but they were enough just then, and they did not hesitate to use them.

They raised their rifles and fired almost simultaneously.

Two of the fleeing men dropped, one badly wounded and the other dead.

The other kept on running, and reached the break in the stockade, and a small grove of trees gave him a chance to get under cover.

"Ha, ha!" cried the voice of Hank Hesper. "Come on, Young Wild West! I dare you to follow me!"

The fellow who had escaped was the leader of the renegades.

Wild had heard him speak before, and he never made a mistake in a voice.

"I'll accept that challenge," he called out, and then, his rifle ready for a shot at an instant's notice, he made for the point where the villain had crawled through the stockade.

He reached it with the scout close at his heels, and without the least hesitation went through to the other side.

Hank Hesper had been waiting for him, and there he stood right in front of him.

The renegade raised his revolver and pressed the trigger.

The chambers were empty, and only a sharp click resulted.

But it is doubtful if he would have hit the boy, anyway, as Wild dropped to the ground the moment he saw the man in front of him.

He was up like a flash, however, and using his rifle as a club, he made a sweep at him.

Hank Hesper was a very supple man, and he must have divined our hero's intention, for he very deftly dodged the blow and seized hold of the rifle.

Then began a fierce struggle.

But Young Wild West was not the least daunted.

He knew that what he did must be done quickly, so with a lightning-like movement he thrust out his foot and tripped the villain.

Down he went with a thud that nearly took the breath from him.

Cheyenne Charlie was there now, and he was just about to hit him over the head with the butt of his rifle when Wild stopped him.

"We will take him a prisoner," the brave boy said. "The great villain must be made an example of."

"Never!" shrieked the terror of Riley's Run, and he made a lunge at Young Wild West's knee with his knife.

But the next instant the weapon was sent flying from his grasp by a well-directed kick from Cheyenne Charlie.

Having lost his rifle when he started to run, he now had no weapons left and he started to run.

Becoming exasperated Cheyenne Charlie raised his rifle and pressed the trigger.

The bullet hit the fleeing villain in the left arm, but did not check his speed a particle.

Wild was barefooted, but he started after him.

"I'm going to make a prisoner of you. Hank Hesper," he called out. "You may as well stop running."

Suddenly he did stop running.

He turned and tried to strike Wild with his fist as he came up.

It was at that very instant that Wild's right shot out and it caught the renegade squarely on the point of the jaw.

Down he went like a log and remained perfectly motionless.

"Whew!" exclaimed the boy. "I believe the delivering of that blow jarred me more than any I ever struck before. I feel as though I must have knocked the scoundrel's head off his shoulders."

"You didn't do that quite," replied Charlie, who had come up and was bending over the prostrate form, "but you have finished him, I guess."

"Well, I'll take your word for it. But let's carry him inside the stockade, anyway."

Hank Hesper's neck had been broken by the blow he had met so squarely.

They found that the inmates had come outside, and were searching the premises.

"We've found seven of 'em," said Wal Wisp, "an' two of 'em are Jose, ther greaser, an' ther man Dick, what you chased out of town to-day. They must have put up a job with Hank Hesper to clean us out this morning."

"Well, if they did they deserve what they got, then," replied Wild. "As for Hank Hesper, he lies over there dead, and he will no longer be the scourge of this part of the country."

In the afternoon the eight bodies were buried by the cowboys.

Young Wild West and his partners remained there for a week; then they went back to Weston, our hero being satisfied with his bargain.

Next week's issue will contain "YOUNG WILD WEST ON THE TRAIL; OR, OUTWITTING THE REDSKINS."

SEND POSTAL FOR OUR FREE CATALOGUE.

CURRENT NEWS

The largest reptile is the man-eating, salt-water crocodile of southern Asia and Australia. It measures thirty feet in length from end of nose to tip of tail. One man makes a comfortable mouthful for this savage creature.

Twenty acres were found covered with fish when a coffer dam at the Government dam on the Ohio River a few miles below Evansville, Ind., was pumped out. People came with baskets and sacks for miles around and carried the fish home.

Miss Irma Pratt of Barton, Ohio, was graduated from the local high school after completing a remarkable record. She commuted on the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad between Barton and St. Clairsville and during her five years in high school was never tardy and never missed a session of school. She travelled 8,000 miles on the train to and from school.

George Wertzeberger, an employee of the American Steel Foundries Company, has received a judgment of \$1,500 in the Lake Superior Court because he lost part of his finger while at work in the plant. A jury also gave James Welich \$1,000 for a broken back. Welich was employed by Henry Goebel, a Whiting contractor. He fell off a scaffold.

The voyage to England now costs on the best ships about half the rate charged by the Britannia, the first mail steamer to cross the ocean, seventy years ago. One can go first class for 3 cents a mile, second class for half of that, and third class, with better accommodations than the best in the Britannia's day, for about 80 cents a hundred miles, and these rates include meals.

A hat brush which is carried within the hat itself is a recent Paris novelty. It can be used with felt or silk hats. The brush is of small size and very light weight, and is provided with a clamp which allows of fixing it inside the hat. Such a little device will prove most convenient either for ordinary times or in traveling. Two kinds of brush can be used according to the case; that is, a fine brush for felt hats or a plush makeup for use with silk hats. The brush in any case does not weigh more than half an ounce.

A human finger will shortly ornament the neckties of Private Sherrill, Troop I., Thirteenth Cavalry, at Fort Riley, Kans., if he can persuade any of the local jewelers to mount it for him on a stick pin. Sherrill walked into a jewelry store and placed the gruesome object on the counter. "Can you mount this for me on a stick pin?" he asked. The jeweler replied that he could. He picked it up. "What is it?" he asked. When told that it was a human finger he refused to undertake the job. Sherrill says that the finger was given to him by his father, who cut it from the hand of a negro who was lynched in Cairo, Ill., in 1901. It was "pickled" by a physician and Sherrill has been carrying it in his pocket for several years.

In Western Patagonia, among the Cordillera Mountains, dwell the giants of whom so many big stories have been told. As a matter of fact, these Araucanians, as they are called, are rarely under six feet in height, and sometimes reach eight feet, seven-foot men being not infrequent. Though mildly disposed, they admit no strangers to their territory, and by stubborn resistance they have compelled Chili to let them alone. Fabulous treasures of gold and silver are believed to be stored away in their mountains, but prospectors who have ventured thither have always been driven away. They commonly adorn themselves with rich and heavy ornaments of these precious metals. The greater part of Patagonia belongs now to the Argentine Republic, Chili holding by treaty the strip along the Pacific coast, which continues its shoestring-like territory for nearly half the length of South America. Most of the country is a desert waste, cold of climate, and contrasting strongly with the richly productive pampas or plains of the Southern Argentine. These pampas are remarkable for the strange illusion which beset the eye of the traveler who journeys over them. On any bright day a distant thistle field is as like as not to be transformed seemingly into a forest, while a few clumps of grass will take on the appearance of horsemen. Mirages are constantly in view, frequently offering a delusive prospect of water, by which men are often deceived, but their horses never.

The Military Bureau of the Panama-Pacific International Exposition has completed plans for housing, free of cost, troops of the United States National Guard, independent military organizations, cadets from military and agricultural colleges, and high schools, and uniformed fraternal societies which may care to accept the hospitality of the exposition, and which meet the requirements, in the matter of drill, numbers and personnel, of the exposition authorities. Attractive barracks have been provided at the foot of Van Ness Avenue, nearly opposite the one entrance to the exposition, and overlooking the bay, the Golden Gate, and the beautiful Marin county shore. Visiting organizations will be expected to join in parades, drills, etc., at the request of the exposition authorities, and on these occasions no charge will be made for entrance to the grounds. Cots and mattresses will be provided by the exposition. It will be necessary for organizations to provide their own linen and blankets. A mess will be maintained at which excellent board may be had at the rate of seventy-five cents per man per day. Requests for reservations should be sent in as early as possible, as a great number of organizations have already been booked, and the exposition authorities have adopted the policy, "first come, first served." There will be competitions between visiting organizations throughout the summer and fall. If further information is required, request for the same should be addressed to Capt. Edward Carpenter, C.A.C., U.S.A., Chief of the Military Bureau, Service Building, P.P.I.E. Lieut. D. L. Roscoe, 1st U.S. Cav., is assistant chief of the military bureau.

The Fate of Philip Funk

—OR—

LEFT IN THE LAND OF FIRE

By "PAWNEE JACK"

(A SERIAL STORY)

CHAPTER XXIV. (continued)

Turning the wheel over to the steward they stood beside the unfortunate man, whose face was now distorted out of all human semblance, so terrible was the swelling the poisoned arrow had caused.

"He has been trying to speak," said Susie. "He keeps asking for George."

"Here I am, Phil," said George, bending down toward him. "What do you want, old man?"

"Dying!" gasped the sufferer. "George, get the papers—they dropped on the rocks. The treasure! It's hidden in the cave. They hung me! Hung me by the feet, boys. The blood all went to my head. See how it's swelled! Oh, George! George!"

This was all he said, for a moment later he breathed his last.

It was easy to understand that his reason had only partially returned, and that he fancied himself still with George on the brig Bartow; that he had lost all recollection of what had occurred.

Later in the day all hands gathered at the rail while George and Tom launched the body overboard.

As it struck the water a huge, scaly head was suddenly projected out, and a cavernous mouth filled with enormous teeth closed upon the remains of Philip Funk and sank out of sight beneath the waves.

What the creature was could never be learned, but it certainly was not a shark.

"Never in all my life did I see the like before," Stewart Mann declared, "and I have been following the sea for thirty years."

This was the last of the long series of adventures which began when the E. W. Sutton sailed into the Straits of Magellan.

In due time the ship sailed out of the Straits, and began working her way up the Chilean coast, coming safely into the harbor of Valparaiso some days later on.

The question now was what to do with the treasure.

George was for reporting the matter to the American consul, for he never again even suggested keeping the gold for themselves.

The steward rather favored the same plan, but Tom insisted that the best way was to deal directly with the bank.

Leaving Jeff, Susie and the steward on board, George and Tom pulled ashore, landing on the mole shortly before noon.

They went straight to the bank, which they had no difficulty in finding.

The arrival of the ship had already been reported to the consul by the custom-house officer, who boarded it as they entered the harbor, to whom George told the story of the mutiny and the attack of the Fuegians on the crew, but did not mention the treasure.

Entering the bank, Tom asked for an interpreter, to whom he stated that they had a most important communication to make to the officers of the bank, and were shown into a private room, where a grave-looking old gentleman received them, and asked their business politely enough.

"You speak up, Tom," whispered George. "I'm no good at a job like this."

"We wish to ask about the money stolen from this bank some years ago by Don Jose Uriate," said Tom, boldly. "Suppose there was such a thing as giving information which might lead to its recovery, would there be any reward?"

The bank president stared.

"Who are you? What do you know?" he asked.

"That is not the point at all," said Tom. "If you will kindly answer my question I may have something more to tell."

"Uriate is dead, and the treasure hopelessly lost in the Straits of Magellan," replied the bank president. "Before this was known there was a reward of \$50,000 offered for its recovery."

"Does that still hold good?"

"It does. Speak out, boy! I see you know something. I promise to stand by you in this matter if that money is ever returned to the bank."

Then Tom did speak out, and told all, and the president of the Bank of Chile did stand by the boys in great shape.

There proved to be only a few thousand dollars of the treasure missing when it was counted after its return to the bank.

In due time Tom received the fifty-thousand-dollar reward, which he divided equally with George, Jeff, Mr. Mann (the steward) and Susie Olsen.

There was also several thousand dollars' salvage on the Sutton to divide later on.

Well, as to the end of it all, George, by the direction of the underwriters, who were cabled, hired a crew, and took the Sutton to San Francisco in safety, and when he next sailed out of that port it was in command of a fine ship

of his own, in which both he and Tom were each interested to the extent of a third.

Tom was mate now, and after several successful voyages became captain of a ship of his own, after which he married Susie Olsen, having never lost sight of the girl he had so gallantly rescued in the Straits of Magellan.

Mr. Mann sticks to George, and is steward of his ship. Jeff is running a large restaurant in San Francisco to-day.

Tom still follows the sea, and has made lots of money.

Like all true sailors, he loves to spin yarns about his voyages, and his favorite yarn is the one we have just been telling, about "The Fate of Philip Funk."

THE END.

NEXT WEEK

NEXT WEEK

A NEW STORY ENTITLED

SINBAD THE SECOND

—OR—

The Wonderful Adventures of a New Monte Cristo

By "Pawnee Jack"

OUT NEXT WEEK

A NEW NOAH'S ARK.

Uncle Sam is building a real Noah's Ark in the city of Washington.

True, it is never expected to make a voyage, but it will be located on the banks of the Potomac, not far from the water, so that with a little structural modification it might be set afloat in case of necessity.

The ark will be ninety feet long and thirty-five feet wide—or "beam"—as navigators would say. It will be of two stories, or decks, and built expressly for the accommodation of animals, which will include monkeys, dogs, cats, mice, rats, rabbits, guineapigs, horses, chickens, calves and goats.

The affair will be in some respects very superior to Noah's celebrated craft, inasmuch as the plans require that it shall be ratproof, vermin-proof, fireproof and excellently ventilated and lighted. In short, it is to be as sanitary a structure as possible, in order that the animals may be kept healthy and comfortable.

This Government ark is designed for scientific purposes. It is to be built in obedience to an act of Congress which became law August 13, 1912, and which requires the Public Health Service to "investigate the diseases of man." The contract for its construction has been let for \$20,852, and the keel is about to be laid (figuratively speaking) on the grounds of the Hygienic Laboratory at Twenty-fifth and E streets.

If the ark were called a sanitarium for beasts and birds, such a term would not be much amiss, inasmuch as the inmates are subjected therein to hospital treatment. It was by experiments with monkeys, for example, that Dr. Anderson, the surgeon in charge of the Hygienic Laboratory, found out how the infection of measles is conveyed. He

discovered that it is communicated by the nasal discharges of the sufferer, and that the early stage of the malady is the period during which the contagion is most likely to occur.

Now, the monkey ward in the ark sanitarium is to be the most important. The monkeys will have a large room all to themselves, with a matron in charge. Most of these monkeys will be of the species known as the Rhesus, which is selected for experimental purposes for two reasons—first, because it is mild of temper and not vicious; and, second, for the reason that it is rather high up in the simian scale and correspondingly near to man.

Monkeys will "take" almost any human disease. And why not? They are people. At all events—whether the Darwinian theory be accepted or not—it is impossible to deny the fact that human beings (physiologically speaking) are nothing more than a superior race of apes. Casual observation of their anatomical structure makes that manifest. In other words, we are super-apes—which ought to be to us a source of pride.

There is to be no vivisection on board the ark—no operations of experimental surgery. The patients will be treated as kindly and carefully as if they were human. But only in some instances will they suffer from diseases. In other cases (as with many guinea pigs and rabbits) they will be used merely for testing the potency and purity of anti-toxins and vaccines sold in interstate traffic. Calves will be dosed in this way with smallpox vaccine to determine the efficiency of the latter as an immunizer.

There will be a maternity ward, in which the young animals born on board the ark will receive, together with their mothers, the most expert attention. The babies of all kinds will be reared and nourished in accordance with the newest ideas. For animals suffering with communicable diseases there will be an "isolation ward," in which the technique practiced for the prevention of infections will be absolutely up to date.

Had it been practicable in the hospitals of the Civil War to apply such methods as will be used in the new ark of the Public Health Service, tens of thousands of lives would have been saved. But the knowledge now available for the benefit of monkeys and rabbits did not exist, and could not therefore be employed for human beings half a century ago.

DO MEN EARN AS MUCH AS FORMERLY.

Do professional men earn as much as formerly? We hear of big doctor bills and huge attorney fees, but is the average as good? Jefferson, who never turned around without noting the fact in his diary, has left a record of his legal fees. He was earning \$3,000 very shortly after he began to practice in what to-day would be called a village. I have the word of former Attorney General W. U. Hensel for the statement that James Buchanan, Pennsylvania's only president of the United States, earned an average of \$6,500 a year for the first five years he practiced law in Lancaster. At the end of that period he was making \$8,000 a year. How many young lawyers in America to-day do that well? Lancaster at the time when Buchanan was doing this was a town of but a few thousand people. And a dollar when Monroe was president bought as much as several dollars would buy now.

ITEMS OF INTEREST

PROTECTION AGAINST GAS.

A Danish scientist has succeeded in discovering what the German soldiers use to protect themselves against the asphyxiating gases which they employ against the enemy. The German troops use a mask of twisted oakum. They are also supplied with vials containing a liquid made of 10 per cent. of hyposulphite of sodium and either a saturated solution of bicarbonate or one per cent. of lime water. Before they put on the mask they wet it with this liquid. To deal with difficulty of breathing they use one milligramme of atropin, in the form of a subcutaneous injection, and oxygen gas.

DRYING A BASEBALL GROUND.

On the afternoon of the game the baseball diamond was still wet from the morning rains. The grassy outfield had absorbed most of the water and was fit to play on, but the bare ground of the diamond harbored many nasty puddles. Here is the way the ground was treated to get it into condition. As much water as possible was swept away with brooms. Then sawdust was sprinkled over the muddy surfaces, thus absorbing much of the moisture that remained. Over this mud and sawdust oil was poured and set on fire, the great heat doing much more efficient work than the sun in drying the ground, besides consuming the wet sawdust.

THE MEANEST MAN.

A Turkish story runs, according to the Buffalo Commercial, that, dying, a pious man bequeathed to his son, charging him to give \$100 to the meanest man he could find and \$100 to the most foolish. The most foolish man is another story. As to the meanest, accounts agreed that a certain *cadi* filled the bill. Accordingly the dutiful son offered him \$100. "But I can't take your \$100," said the *cadi*. "I never knew your father. There was no reason why he should leave me the money." "It's yours all right," persisted the mourning youth. "I might take it in a pretended transaction," said the *cadi*, relenting. "Suppose—I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll sell you all that snow in the courtyard for \$100." The young man agreed, willing to be quit of his trust on any terms. Next day he was arrested, taken before the *cadi* and ordered to remove his snow at once. As this was a command the young man was utterly unable to execute, he was fined \$20 by the *cadi* for his disobedience. "At least," the young man said sorrowfully as he left the court, "father's \$100 went to the right man."

LIFE ON AN OCEAN LINER.

The many cafes aboard a modern ocean liner have the atmosphere of the boulevards. The old, long baronial board presided over by the captain, to which the passengers were summoned by bell or trumpet, has given way to separate tables. One is free to dine, lunch or sup alone at any hour in any seat at any one of a hundred small tables, seating two, or one may join a party at a table seating seven, sur-

rounded by decorations that rival those of the best restaurants ashore.

And as in any first class hotel, the guest is not restricted to a table d'hôte menu. He can order from an epicure's bill of fare, and all meals are included in the price of the passage. Cafes for those who do not smoke, a new convenience, have the air of such places in Vienna. These are distinct from the open air veranda cafes with their teak-wood tables.

Instead of the salt meats of twenty years ago both cabin and steerage passengers have fresh meat daily. Twenty-eight thousand pounds of meat and 15,000 liters of beer were consumed by the passengers of a single liner on one recent voyage, while on the same ship the cost of setting the table for a single year was \$4,000,000.

This talk of fine accommodations sounds expensive, but you do not need to take these expensive cabins unless you are willing to and can pay for them. All of the other comforts, conveniences and luxuries are as free to the poorest traveler as to the richest, and not the least interesting fact about ocean travel is that its cost is constantly growing less.

A WELL FULL OF FISH.

There is a remarkable well in southwestern Minnesota concerning which a correspondent writes to us, says *Youth's Companion*. The well began to overflow not long after it was dug, for a strong spring burst out in the bottom of it, after the melting of the heavy winter snows. The well was surrounded by a tight, 4-foot curbing, between the narrow cracks of which a stream of water trickled steadily away.

One morning in September the well was found to be full of tiny fish. Everyone in the family hastened to see the sight. The fish were crowded so thickly together that they were actually dying for lack of air. They were from one inch to four or five inches long. The curbing was too tight to permit them to float out, so a board was knocked off and a stream of fish began to swim out with the current.

So thick were the fish that it was impossible even to water the stock. Any attempt to dig up a pail of water only resulted in a pail of tiny fish. Apparently there was no diminution in numbers, although they floated away with the overflow for several weeks.

People from all around the country came to see this wonderful well. Pickerel, bass, perch and other kinds of fish were identified. No one ever discovered where they came from. No bass or pickerel are to be found in any stream nearer than twenty miles. After much study and discussion of the problem, the only conclusion that could possibly be accepted was that the fish must have been drawn into an underground current from some river, and carried along for miles until they found this opening.

The next fall more fish came in about the same time, although not in nearly so great numbers. After that the spring began to stop up, and the well was thereafter an ordinary instead of an extraordinary one.

THE ROB ROYS

—OR—

BOLD BOB, THE CAPTAIN OF THE TEAM

By DICK ELLISON

(A SERIAL STORY)

CHAPTER XIII. (continued)

"None save the Orangemen," was the prompt retort, for there were fully as many Orangemen present as there were Rob Roys. "They can beat anything!"

"Save the Rob Roys, and no team upon earth will ever beat them, not while Bold Bob is their captain," half a dozen voices sang out. "The medal is theirs, it always has been, it always will be, and when a rival wins it honestly and fairly, not by fraud and trickery, will we surrender it willingly, gracefully, but not before. And first of all every one present must acknowledge that our beloved captain is innocent of the disgraceful charge preferred against him."

Not a single person in the room, even the members of the Orangemen, believed the gallant captain of the Rob Roys guilty, until they came to Henry Selden. He paused, was silent for some moments, and then, making an apparent attempt to speak calmly, he said slowly:

"While I am sorry for MacGregor, and was deeply grieved to find the money in his possession, I do not see how you can expect me to say that he is innocent, for how can he be? Believe me, there is not one among you who feels worse over this unfortunate affair than I do, but at the same time I do feel it my duty to see a wrong righted. I——"

He was interrupted by a shower of hisses.

"Right!" was shouted in his ears—"right! Little you know about right. It is the wrong you are familiar with. And didn't Sidney Worth see you put the money in Bold Bob's pocket? So did Aunt Rosie. You need not try and sneak out of it in that way. I think Sidney Worth's word is as good as yours any day in the week."

Henry Selden shrugged his shoulders.

"Of course Miss Worth would swear to that statement," he sneered. "For I am sure that every one present to-night knows how she feels towards this handsome beggar. In fact," with a bitter, mocking laugh, "the entire county is talking and laughing about the way Colonel Worth's daughter is smitten with Robert MacGregor, a man who is barely able to pay for the shoes he wears, and who always sponges on his friends. Of course it is a slur on her good taste, but she——"

He never finished the cowardly sentence, for crack! A soft, yet firm hand came down across his mouth with such force as to draw the blood. It was a dainty, dimpled palm to be sure, but anger lent it strength, and with flashing

eyes and white face Sidney Worth stood before him. "You coward!" she panted, "you hound! How dare you openly insult me? Because I have exposed you in your guilt, you take this means of getting revenge. You know as well as I do that you placed that money in Mr. MacGregor's pocket, in the hope of seeing him branded as a thief, but fortunately your plans have failed, and I am not the only witness."

"'Deed an' 'deed yo' hain't, Miss Sidney," Rosie's voice suddenly broke in. "Yo' Aunt Rosie she see de hull ting, an' she done gwine ter swar ter hit if ebery tooth in her haid done drap out. I tell yo', chile, I'se gwine ter stick ter Marse Rob if I lose my job."

"Good for you, Rosie!" a dozen voices shouted in chorus. "Good for you—you are worth more than twenty ordinary people."

"Yo' kin jes' bet yo' bes' shoes, honey chile, dat yo' Aunt Rosie am right in hit," the delighted negress exclaimed. "An' when she done say a ting she sticks ter hit. She hain't like one ob dem yaller gals dat am ready fo' ter swing on ebery niggah's gate. No, sah. She's de ole stan'by, an' doan yo' fo'git hit. Yo' jes' hold yo' Aunt Rosie's bonnit an' she'll sail in an' do de res'."

"There, there, Rosie, that is all right, but you must keep quiet, for we do not need you now," Professor Romaine said quickly; "your testimony, however, has been of great help to us to-night."

"I reckon hit has, boss," the fat cook chuckled; "an' now I done gwine down ter the kitchen ter keep dat Tip from chokin' hisself ter death. De las' I see ob him he wus tryin' ter git a hen's leg down his swaller, an' I done 'clar fo' de goodness I tink he turn inter a rooster. But bless yo' heart yo' can't kill dat chile. He's robbed moah hen roosts den enny niggah in de county, an' I done specs he's got feathers all ober his legs. Go 'way dar, he's a debbil fo' shuah."

With those words Rosie darted downstairs, just in time to save Tip and Topsey from murdering each other. A plump roast chicken was the cause of the battle, and Topsey had Tip by the wool. Another instant and poor Tip would have been minus a portion of his thick wool.

"Look ahead, chile, yo' want ter mak yo' po' brudder bald-haired fo' he grows whiskers on his chin?" Rosie demanded, wrathfully, forgetting that Topsey was her favorite. "Yo' wants ter kill dat chile? I reckon I takes a han' in dis maffah, an' if I once hits yo' on de haid,

yo'll tink dat a sly-coon done hit yo'. Go 'way, dar, fo' I'se comin' an' I'm a bad one."

The next moment Topsey found herself flying across the room, but she never let go her grasp on the chicken. And when poor Tip was sobbing dolefully in a dark corner, rubbing the sore spot on his head, Topsey was devouring the chicken she had succeeded in gaining possession of.

Robert MacGregor stood erect before his accuser.

"Why should you accuse me of stealing your money?" he asked, sternly. "What right have you to cast such a slur upon me?"

"Why should I not accuse you when I find the money upon your person?" was the insolent reply. "That alone is proof enough, and then aside from that you are poor. You need money, for," with a bitter mocking burst of laughter, "when a young man, or rather I should say, when a penniless beggar aspires to the hand of an only child and an heiress, he naturally wants money to buy her gloves and flowers. When there is no way for him to earn it, all he can do is to steal it, and——"

He never finished the cowardly remark, for the next instant Mr. Henry Selden measured his length upon the floor. He was too dazed and stunned at first to even think, but when he did manage to struggle to his feet, his face was livid with rage.

"Blame you, but I'll get even with you for this," he panted. "You think because you are the winner now that it will always last, but, mark me well, it will change, and when I once get the upper hand, rest assured I will not let go."

"That is something you will never be able to do," our hero answered calmly.

And then Prof. Romaine stepped forward, saying sternly:

"Mr. Selden, the doors of Fairview are closed against you from this night on. You have tried to ruin the life and reputation of one of my best pupils, and you have failed. Never cross this threshold again, and if I ever hear of you doing anything like this again, I shall make you suffer. I will bid you good night."

CHAPTER XIV.

THE SERENADE.

Had a thunderbolt suddenly fallen at Henry Selden's feet he could not have been more surprised, for he had always relied upon his father's money and social position to get him out of all his scrapes, and to be publicly turned out of Fairview was more than he expected. Still there was nothing more to do than to submit as gracefully as possible. He realized that the eyes of every boy and girl were following him as he slowly walked forth from the broad hall and the wide steps for the last time, and his heart was filled with rage.

He vowed deep and bitter vengeance between his set teeth, and he was the very one to keep his word.

"Blame them all!" he muttered, his under lip trembling with rage. "Blame them all, but I will get even with them yet! To think that I, Henry Selden, the son of the richest man in town, should be publicly dismissed from old Fairview College! Why, it is enough to make the blood of a saint boil!"

He did not stop to think how he had sought to ruin the career of one who never in any way wronged him. As is usual with such selfish mortals, the injury was all on one side.

He did not walk quite as jauntily when he left the grounds of Fairview as when he entered them, and a big sigh of relief went up from those present when he was gone.

"Well, there, I hope we have seen the last, the very last of the charming Mr. Henry Selden," Barbara Voss remarked, with a shrug of her plump shoulders. "For of all the contemptible specimens of humanity, he is the worst. I can't call him a man, he is only a thing, and I for one am glad that we will not be obliged to see his ugly face again. Hurrah for Bold Bob, and death to the traitor who sought to ruin him!"

"Hush, hush, Bab, dear," Sidney implored, her pretty face growing scarlet, though at the same time her heart echoed the very sentiments of her friend. "You can think what you like, but it is not always wise to say so. It will be better to talk about it later. This is not the proper time or place."

It was, of course, highly gratifying to Bold Bob to come out victorious and triumph over his enemy, yet he was not the kind of boy to gloat over the downfall of any one.

"I want to congratulate you, Mr. MacGregor," Sidney Worth whispered, coming close to him, and laying one hand on his arm. "I was never so angry in all my life! I certainly think Henry Selden is the most contemptible specimen of manhood I ever came in contact with, and he has got the punishment he deserves."

"I do not consider him worth thinking about. Miss Worth," our hero answered, lightly. "He has shown himself to be so utterly devoid of all manly traits, and so many different times, too, that I have given him up entirely. At the same time I am sorry for him."

"I do not see how you can be sorry for him," the fair girl replied, shaking her head gravely. "For if a man had attempted to wrong me as many times as he has you, I should hate him. You must have a far better disposition than I have."

"Well, Miss Sidney, I was never noted for being angelic," he answered, with a light laugh. "But I think I am a sort of martyr since I have known him. I have put up with sneers and snubs, I have paid no attention to his insults, and the meeker I am the worse he acts. Ah, it is the way of the world."

"Yes, the world is hard and cruel," Sidney replied, her sweet voice taking on a sad tinge. "and the longer we live the colder we find it. It is indeed a sorrowful lesson, but one that cannot be well avoided. Ah, well, we must live and learn I suppose."

(To be Continued)

TIMELY TOPICS

Candy and ice cream for Evansville, Ind., school children cost the parents more than \$10,000 last year, but educators of the city say that the money was well spent. In the last three years a colony of restaurants and confectioners have sprung up about the various public school buildings of the city. For the main part they depend on the children for their revenue.

A modest, but fitting, monument to cost \$1,000 is to be erected to the memory of George Burton Meek of Sandusky County, the first American boy who lost his life in the Spanish-American War. He was killed on the United States gunboat Winslow, at the battle of Cardenas Harbor, Cuba, May 11, 1898. He was born in Sandusky County, March 6, 1873. Senator White's bill providing for the monument was passed some time ago by the Senate and a few days ago by the House.

Mrs. Mary B. Emery of Auburn, Me., seventy-nine, has a rare collection of antique china which belonged to her mother. A few plates, a cup, saucer, bowl and potato dish, of a set over seventy years old, of white china, with light green borders and dark brown scenery in the centers, showing figures of men and women, swans, trees, urns, etc. A bowl-like cup and saucer of white china decorated with blue and red is seventy-five years old, and the oldest piece of china is a tiny yellow teacup made without a handle. This cup belonged to Mrs. Emery's great-aunt and is over 150 years old.

The Central News of London says Sir Thomas Lipton will place immediately an order for a yacht to be called Shamrock V., if it develops, as he suspects, that the design of the Shamrock IV. has been disclosed to American yachtsmen. Sir Thomas is determined to race a boat the design lines of which are a complete secret to Americans. Sir Thomas Lipton's yacht Shamrock IV., with which he had challenged for the America's Cup, arrived in New York shortly after the outbreak of the war last year. The races for the trophy were postponed and the Shamrock IV. was housed in a Brooklyn shipyard, where she now is.

Winners in the United States Revolver Association indoor championship tournament, held throughout the United States and Panama Canal Zone, are announced by the secretary of the association, as follows: Target revolver, D. A. Atkinson, Pittsburgh, 475; target pistol, George Armstrong, Berkeley, Cal., 478; pocket revolver, J. H. Snook, Columbus, Ohio, 214; novice match, G. E. Kimball, San Francisco, 237; police team match, Portland, Ore., team, 237. New records were established by Atkinson in the target revolver match with 475 out of a possible 500, Armstrong in the target pistol match with 478 out of a possible 500, and Snook in the pocket revolver championship with 214 out of a possible 250. In the novice match the first four workmen all bettered the previous record of 231, with Snook leading with 237.

To instantaneously produce a light without the use of matches, and without the danger of setting things on fire, take an oblong vial of the whitest and clearest glass; put in it a piece of phosphorus about the size of a pea, upon which pour some olive oil, heated to the boiling point, filling the vial about one-third full, and then seal the vial hermetically. To use it, remove the cork and allow the air to enter the vial, and then recork it. The whole empty space in the bottle will then become luminous, and the light obtained will be equal to that of a dim lamp. As soon as the light becomes weak, its power can be increased by opening the vial and allowing a fresh supply of air to enter. In winter it is sometimes necessary to heat the vial between the hands to increase the fluidity of the oil. Thus prepared, the vial may be used for six months. This contrivance has long been used by the watchmen of Paris in all magazines where explosives or inflammable materials are stored.

A motor car driver incurably afflicted with speed mania returned to America after a four years' stay in London and Paris. "What brought you back?" a friend inquired. "The wounded soldiers," said the driver. "For a man of my habits there is too much danger of getting into trouble on the other side now. A fellow simply cannot drive as fast as formerly. We are continually being held up by wounded soldiers. The most reckless driver on earth involuntarily slows down when those poor wrecks in khaki, or French red and blue, or a Moroccan or Indian medley of colors, gets in his way. They move very slowly, those wounded men. They will recover, they are able to take exercise; many of them, no doubt, will return to the front, but at present they are anything but spry. They abound in all the streets. Every time I stopped to let one hobble past my throat choked up. That was one thing that sent me back home, the choking—that, and the slow progress."

The remarkable adventures of a 12-year-old boy, Andre Guede by name, on the battlefield beyond the Marne, were told in a letter that Alexandre Millerand, the French Minister of War, has made public, says Youth's Companion. When the troops were passing through the village of Neuilly-en-Thelle, little Andre said to his mother, "I'm going to follow the soldiers." Off he went, and the regiment he followed was soon in the thick of the fight. Sub-Lieutenant Grivelet took the boy under his protection. During the three days of the battle of Bouillancy the younger remained by the side of the lieutenant on the firing line, and would not leave him, even though the German artillery and machine-gun fire swept the ranks. Lieutenant Grivelet was wounded, and, still under fire, Andre carried the officer's sword, revolver, maps and equipment while they looked for an ambulance. The lieutenant was picked up by the Red Cross wagon and driven to the railway station to take the hospital train. Andre ran for miles after the vehicle, and succeeded in hiding himself in the train. So he accompanied Grivelet to Riva Bella, where he is now staying, happy in the companionship of his wounded friend.

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GOOD CURRENT NEWS ARTICLES

W. M. Sloan, Under Sheriff of Osage County, Okla., fell asleep on an M., K. and T. train north of McAlester and awoke as the train pulled into McAlester yards to find that George Braswell, a prisoner he was bringing to the penitentiary, was gone. Braswell was under five-year sentence for horse theft.

Warning of the unexpected reappearance of the seventeen year locust, technically known as Brood 6 of the cicada, in the East in May and June was issued by the Department of Agriculture. Little actual damage to nurseries and young orchards occurred from the insect. Scientists of the department, however, kept a close watch over the territory where the locusts appeared, with a view to minimizing the damage.

Charles Nelson pleaded for freedom from the charge of stealing flowers on the grounds that the urge of his ancestors impelled him to pluck flowers from the water works park, Detroit. "Whenever I get too much to drink a feeling comes over me," he told Justice Galney. "My people in Denmark are gardeners, and their people before them specialized in the flower trade." He was found guilty, but sentence was suspended.

The Turkish troops defending the Gallipoli Peninsula against the landing forces of the allies number 80,000 men, according to the correspondent at Athens of the Reuter Telegram Company. The Turks are remaining on the defensive in the Caucasus, and are concentrating all their efforts of the Dardanelles, whither reinforcements are being brought from Syria. The supplies of ammunition, both for the infantry and the artillery, are reported to be decreasing rapidly with no prospect of being replenished.

A blind boy, twenty years of age, is approaching a successful end of his freshman year at Harvard. He is William C. Plunkett of Roxbury, who entered the university last September with honors and who has stood the pace in academic work at Cambridge. The success that Plunkett has met in his first year, which is the most trying event even to students in the possession of all their faculties, has given him courage in all his hopes that he will be able to go all the way through college and earn a degree.

The greatest atmospheric freak that has hit this section for many months struck the walnut grove on the Phillips ranch west of Pomona, Cal. It took the form of a small cyclone and played a remarkable prank. In one spot eight mammoth English walnut trees were uprooted. The eight formed almost a perfect circle and the ninth tree, which stood directly in the center, was left standing, although the ground around it shows that the roots were torn loose from the earth. Forty-three mature walnut trees were uprooted in the Phillips grove by the same storm. The twister also lifted the cap from the manhole on top of the Phillips ranch house, and a few miles further west it passed through a big walnut grove, uprooting every tree in one row and not turning a leaf on any of the others.

GRINS AND CHUCKLES

Mother—Why did you let him kiss you? Mabel—I couldn't help it. I told him to stop. Mother—You did? Mabel—Yes; every time.

"What is the name of those very long sausages?" asked the man, entering the butcher shop. "You mean dose?" asked the German proprietor, pointing. "Dem is called dachsunds."

City Cousin—Now, you farmers dont have the trouble of house hunting like city folks. Kansas Uncle—Don't, eh? Well, I've been hunting for a house that the cyclone carried away for two years, and I haven't found it yet.

Young Professor (who has taken her down to dinner)—By the way, Miss Gaswell, have you ever seen the nebula of Andromeda? Miss Gaswell—No; I was abroad with papa and mamma when that was played, but I've heard that it drew crowded houses.

Mrs. Hiram Offen—See here, Bridget, the dishes you have put on the table of late have been positively dirty. Something's got to be done about it. Bridget—True for ye, ma'am: if ye only had dark-colored ones, ma'am, they wouldn't show the dirt at all.

"What a nice little boy," said the minister, who was making a call: "won't you come and shake hands, my son?" "Naw!" snapped the nice little boy. "My gracious! Don't you like me?" "Naw! I had ter git me hands an' face washed jist because you come."

Mrs. Black—Your husband hits straight out from the shoulder. He always calls a spade a spade, doesn't he? Mrs. White—I thought he did, but yesterday I was listening while he was spading up a garden patch, and I'm sure I heard him call it something else.

Old Huks (sitting for his photograph)—Well, ain't you ready? What are you waiting for? Photographer—A little pleasanter expression, please. Mrs. Huks (who is standing at one side)—He's got his pleasanter expression on, Mr. Smith. I guess you didn't notice how he looked when we came in.

VICTORIA, THE REFUGEE.

By D. W. Stevens

A glorious autumn sun was flooding its golden light over the towering mountains, fertile valleys, and extensive plains of grand old Mexico. No country, in point of grandeur of scenery, can surpass the land of the Mexican, if we except the towering peaks of Switzerland. There is beauty there untouched by artists' pencil or painters' brush, and will so remain for a thousand years to come.

No mountain roe was more lithe than Alina Cassino, the only child of a hardy mountaineer. Alina's father, in one of the many struggles which had rent his government, had been on the unfortunate side, and was compelled to flee to the mountains to save his life.

Senorita Alina had all her life known only the mountain wilds. She knew but little of the internal commotions that distracted her lovely country. Her heart was gentle, true and loving.

Her mother, dying when she was but an infant, she had only her father, their small flock, and Bollitto, their great dog, on which to bestow her affections. Accustomed to the mountains from her childhood, it was but natural that Alina should be found wandering on the mountain-side, among the groves of chaparral, her only companion Bollitto, and a small carbine, which her father had given her and learned her how to use.

Not infrequently had they been forced to defend their little mountain home from bands of Indians and outlaws. These struggles of her childhood had been severe. Almost from her infancy she had been accustomed to scenes of blood.

Her father, regarded as a mountain outlaw and not daring to claim the protection of his government from the mountain robbers and Indians, was forced to be his own protector.

Alina had chased the fawn all the forenoon, almost as fleet as the wild animal, and had paused, leaning on a large boulder of stone; her elbows rested on the stone, supporting her cheek and her long black hair in wavy masses falling about her well-shaped shoulders of snowy whiteness.

Her eyes, dark and sparkling, wandered down to the bluffs and rocks, thousands of feet below; her dress was of the peculiar homespun goods of the mountaineer, and the tanned deer-skins fringed and ornamented something after the Indian style. The skirt of her maroon-colored dress came only below her knees, and displayed elegantly shaped limbs encased in leggings of tanned deerskin ornamented with fringes and beads. On her feet instead of the Indian moccasins were the small but stout shoes worn by the Mexican mountaineer.

There was no mixed blood in the veins of Alina. She was as pure a Castilian as anybody of nobility in old Spain. Suddenly, loud wild shouts arose from the chaparral and covered the broken portions of the mountain-side not many hundred feet below her. Following the shouts came rapid musket and pistol shots.

Gazing in the direction from which they came, she espied three men bounding up the side of the mountain, leaping from rock to rock, from cliff to cliff, with prodigious strides,

while after them came a dozen soldiers of the cruel Iturbide, the then emperor of Mexico.

As one of the fugitives sprang upon a boulder of stone, scarcely gaining a foothold, one of the pursuers leveled his musket at him; a white puff of smoke ascended from the muzzle, and the fleeing man, throwing his carbine in the air, fell back fully twenty feet below, where he had been struck.

One of the remaining turned, leveled his carbine, and fired. Alina saw the soldier fall, then the rapid popping of guns, and white puffs of smoke from the muskets of the other soldiers, indicating that the pursuers had given the bold fugitives a volley. The girl could even see the bullets striking off bits of stone near the brave mountaineer, for such his dress and manner indicated him to be.

Only a moment did he pause, then bounded away to the side of his companion, who seemed wounded, and was moving more slow every moment.

The mountaineer aided his wounded companion, and reloaded his carbine the best he could. They had not gone fifty paces along the path which wound around the mountain, far below where Alina stood.

Here they paused and again fired. Two of the soldiers fell, but the others pressed on with yells of vengeance, discharging their guns as fast as they could load them.

The wounded man was struck by another bullet and fell dead at the taller fugitive's feet. The man having nothing to impede his flight, hurried on around the spur of the mountain, and was soon lost to sight.

The soldiers of the cruel Iturbide crowded on until Alina saw that not a dozen, but at least a hundred were after the mountaineer.

Alina's whole heart went out in sympathy for the fleeing man. She had been taught from childhood to despise the soldiers of the haughty Iturbide, and naturally her heart would go out toward the mountaineer. He was not only one of the lowly class to which he belonged, who were compelled at times to burrow in the ground like rabbits to escape the cruel soldiers, but now fleeing for his life.

Seizing her carbine, and bidding Bollitto keep at her side, she started in the direction of the small mountain hacienda, taking care that the sharp ridges of stone and bunches of chaparral should conceal her from the view of the enemy.

"They will surely kill father if they find him, she said, as she bounded along the difficult path with the speed of a mountain roe. The path was not only difficult but dangerous. A single false step would send her to eternity.

Occasionally there came to her ears the crack of musketry, and she feared in her heart that the third fugitive had fallen by his prosecutors.

"He was so grand, so noble, and so brave," the poor girl sobbed; "it was awful that he should die. The dogs would not spare even a brave man."

The path was very winding and difficult for even Alina's experienced head and practical feet. As she was winding around the crest of a spur of the mountain, and just emerged on the plateau, the tall, dark-mustached fugitive sprang upon the table-land at the same moment.

So hard pressed was he that he had dropped his carbine and sword, though he ran with a pistol in each hand.

Scarcely had he emerged from the rocks and chaparral

on one side, than a Mexican officer with two soldiers leaped from a clump of dwarfed oaks, and sprang upon him.

The brave mountaineer was not to be overcome without a struggle, and, leveling his pistol, shot one of the soldiers dead. The other fired his piece at the tall stranger, and Alina saw his left arm fall helpless at his side. In an instant, the two remaining men threw themselves on the almost exhausted and wounded fugitive, and bore him to the earth.

All the sympathies of the maiden were with the poor wounded mountaineer, and, leveling her carbine, she shot the soldier through the head. The officer looking around to see from whence the shot came, the stranger sprang to his feet, and with one well-directed blow felled him to the earth. Snatching the sword from the hand of the officer he pinned him to the ground.

Then the tall mountaineer, clasping his wounded wrist with his right hand, looked about to see who his preserver was.

His astonishment can be better imagined than described when he discovered only a beautiful girl, holding in her hand a very light carbine.

Removing his sombrero from his head, and bowing politely, he said:

"Senorita, is it possible that to you I owe my life?"

"I surely have rendered you some aid, senor, but your life is not safe yet. The mountains are full of your enemies. They are behind every boulder in every chaparral, and their guns are aimed at the heart."

"With so brave a defender I might almost brave the entire army of the usurper Iturbide."

"You must be secreted for a few days until the soldiers leave the mountains."

"Where?"

"Follow me, be silent, and I will guide you to a place of safety."

The beautiful girl then took the lead at a swift run down the tortuous mountain path, followed by the wounded Spaniard. All among the mountains could be heard the shouts of the bloodthirsty pursuers, and the girl was frequently compelled to turn aside to allow them to pass. Her keen sense of hearing and sight were a world of advantage to her. The route was a very difficult one, attended with danger at every step. No head but the steady mountaineer could have followed at her rate of speed.

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on one side, than a Mexican officer with two soldiers leaped from a clump of dwarfed oaks, and sprang upon him.

The brave mountaineer was not to be overcome without a struggle, and, leveling his pistol, shot one of the soldiers dead. The other fired his piece at the tall stranger, and Alina saw his left arm fall helpless at his side. In an instant, the two remaining men threw themselves on the almost exhausted and wounded fugitive, and bore him to the earth.

All the sympathies of the maiden were with the poor wounded mountaineer, and, leveling her carbine, she shot the soldier through the head. The officer looking around to see from whence the shot came, the stranger sprang to his feet, and with one well-directed blow felled him to the earth. Snatching the sword from the hand of the officer he pinned him to the ground.

Then the tall mountaineer, clasping his wounded wrist with his right hand, looked about to see who his preserver was.

His astonishment can be better imagined than described when he discovered only a beautiful girl, holding in her hand a very light carbine.

Removing his sombrero from his head, and bowing politely, he said:

"Senorita, is it possible that to you I owe my life?"

"I surely have rendered you some aid, senor, but your life is not safe yet. The mountains are full of your enemies. They are behind every boulder in every chaparral, and their guns are aimed at the heart."

"With so brave a defender I might almost brave the entire army of the usurper Iturbide."

"You must be secreted for a few days until the soldiers leave the mountains."

"Where?"

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INTERESTING ARTICLES

FOUND BURIED MONEY.

Mrs. Daniel Loy, a widow in modest circumstances in Eaton, O., near Richmond, Ind., is \$1,600 richer through the curiosity of Mrs. A. L. Harris, wife of a former Governor of Ohio. Mrs. Harris, a neighbor, entered the Loy cellar to get an article of food for Mrs. Loy, who is ill. Buried under a mass of rubbish she found several fruit jars filled with currency amounting to more than \$1,600.

WATERPROOFING FRENCH UNIFORMS.

In the rainy season, which lasts well into the summer in parts of France and Belgium, the French Army authorities faced the necessity of providing an inexpensive and effective means of waterproofing the uniforms of their soldiers. A chemist came to their rescue with the information that the fat extracted from wool while in the process of cleaning it for manufacture would serve their purpose.

Experiments proved that the chemist was right. The waterproofing is done by reducing the wool fat to a liquid by the use of a solvent and diluting it with benzine or naphtha. The garment is soaked in this solution for a few minutes. It dries in a short time. Neither the color of the article nor the fabric is impaired by the treatment.

TO SEE THROUGH WALLS.

An apparatus that enables a person to see through walls is the latest invention of Guglielmo Marconi, inventor of wireless telegraph, but because of the possibilities for harm it involves, the inventor is reluctant to give his discovery to the world, according to his statement made just before sailing for Europe.

The amazing apparatus is a camera which, when placed against a wall, makes a solid partition transparent, so that a person can see what is going on in the next room.

"I have not quite perfected it," Mr. Marconi said. "Persons can now be seen in the next room if they are close enough to the wall, but at any distance away they become blurred. The transparency effected is not complete, but so far as I have progressed with it, the idea is rather attractive."

Mr. Marconi's wireless experiments on land have convinced him that we soon will be talking across the ocean, and he discussed tests made in his presence at the Sayville wireless plant in which an effort was made to get in communication with Germany by wireless telephone. It is understood that sufficient results were obtained to induce the inventor to remain at the plant until late at night in the hope that he would be able to talk to Berlin.

It is understood experiments toward establishing telephone communication across the ocean have progressed so far that Marconi has taken preliminary steps in organizing a company that has figured out the cost of operation and established a rate schedule.

A telephone over which two speakers can see each other is another invention which Mr. Marconi believes will soon be perfected, although he is not working on it.

UNPAID CARPENTERS BARRICADE VELODROME.

A crowd of more than 100,000 went to Sheepshead Bay, N. Y., the other night for the opening of the new Velodrome, where all the crack cyclists were to give a long program of speed events. The crowd found the entrances boarded up. Inside were the carpenters, who flatly refused to let the Velodrome open until they had been paid for their week's work getting the place ready.

The carpenters held the fort. The crowd yelled for admittance and for explanations. The carpenters refused to budge. The bicycle "fans" wanted to see the races, but the carpenters wanted to get their money. Hundreds of persons held invitations and went prepared to see the pick of the bicycle riders of the world in thrilling assaults on Father Time, but were disappointed.

The carpenters had taken every precaution that the Velodrome should not open. Not only were the entrances barricaded, but they nailed boards across the track, so that it would be impossible to use it.

Some were so angry at the carpenters that they counseled breaking down the barriers and driving the workmen from the place, but cooler heads prevailed, and besides, the reserves were called out and a squad of thirty policemen had a soothing effect.

At 5 o'clock in the afternoon the carpenters issued their ultimatum. They sent word to the management that if they were not paid they would board up the place and prevent the races. The management could not believe they would carry out their threat. The foreman of the job had a long talk with the management. He was firm in his declaration that the only thing to prevent trouble was money but there was none forthcoming.

It was said at the track that the money which was to have gone to the carpenters had been paid to the riders. Bobby Walthour went among the cyclists and tried to raise money to pay the carpenters part of their wages. This scheme did not make much of a hit with the riders, so the collection fell through.

The angry crowd refused to leave the vicinity of the track, and the policemen had their hands full persuading people to move along. Every train brought a new throng, and in front of the Velodrome it was a continual hubbub of protest.

The Velodrome was to have opened the Tuesday night previous, but on account of the bad weather the track was not ready.

One of the events scheduled for the night was the International Derby, which was to bring together all the speed kings. Jackie Clark, the Bedells, Harry Kaiser, and many others were to perform. There was also to be a twenty-five-mile motor paced race and numerous amateur events with all the best riders of this district booked.

There were only two things for the disappointed crowd to do; go home or on down to Coney Island. It was pretty chilly for Island fun, so the majority journeyed back to New York.

ROUGH RIDER DISC PISTOLS.



Made of nicely colored wood 5 1/4 inches long. The power is furnished by rubber bands. Ten discs of cardboard with each pistol. Price, 6c. each, postpaid.

H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.

MYSTERIOUS PLATE LIFTER.



Made of fine rubber, with bulb on one end and inflator at other. Place it under a table cover, under plate or glass, and bulb is pressed underneath, object rises mysteriously; 40 ins.

Price, 25c., postpaid.

BEHR, 150 W. 62d St., New York City.

THE FOUNTAIN RING.



A handsome ring connected with a rubber ball which is concealed in the palm of the hand. A gentle squeeze forces water or cologne in the face of the victim while he is examining it. The ball can be instantly filled by immersing ring in water same as a fountain pen filler. Price by mail, postpaid, 12c. each.

H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.

MAGIC MIRROR.



Fat and lean funny faces. By looking in these mirrors upright your features become narrow and elongated. Look into it sidewise and your phiz broadens out in the most comical manner. Size 3 1/2 x 2 1/4 inches, in a handsome imitation morocco case.

Price, 10c. each, postpaid.

WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.

SHOOTING CIGARETTES.



Do not show this trick to any one who is nervous. He might have a fit. It is a genuine box of high-class cigarettes. The only trouble is that when you light one of the cigarettes it goes off like a fire-cracker, and

the smoker thinks he is in the middle of the European war. A sure cure for the smoking habit. Price, 25c. a box, by mail, postpaid.

WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.

THE PHANTOM FINGER.



As these fingers are cast in moulds in which a person's fingers have been encased, they are a lifelike model of the same. The finger can be made to pass through a person's hat or coat without injury to the hat or garment. It appears to be your own finger. A perfect illusion. Price, 15c.; 2 for 25c., postpaid.

WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.

Co-

MAMAS.



This interesting toy is one of the latest novelties out. It is in great demand. To operate it, the stem is placed in your mouth. You can blow into it, and at the same time pull or jerk lightly

on the string. The mouth opens, and it then cries "Ma-ma," just exactly in the tones of a real, live baby. The sound is so human that it would deceive anybody.

Price 12c. each by mail.

WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.

NOISY HANDKERCHIEF.

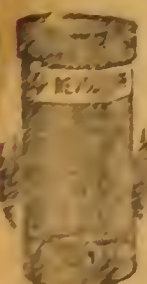


A great deal of amusement may be had with this little article. It imitates the blowing of the nose exactly, except that the noise is magnified at least a dozen times, and sounds like the bass-horn in a German band. This device is

used by simply placing it between the teeth and blowing. The harder the blow the louder the noise. Price, 10c. each by mail, postpaid.

H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.

BLACK-EYE JOKE.



New and amusing joker. The victim is told to hold the tube close to his eye so as to exclude all light from the back, and then to remove the tube until pictures appear in the center. In trying to locate the pictures he will receive the finest black-eye you ever saw. We furnish a small box of blackening preparation with each tube, so the joke can be used indefinitely. Those not in the trick will be caught every time. Absor-

Price by mail 15c. each; 2 for 25c.

WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.

MAGIC PIPE.



Made of a regular corn-cob pipe, with rubber figures inside; by blowing through the stem the figure will jump out. Made in following figures: rabbits, donkeys, cats, chickens, etc.

Price, 10c., postpaid.

WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.

X-RAY WONDER



This is a wonderful little optical illusion. In use, you apparently see the bones in your hand, the hole in a pipe-stem, the lead in a pencil, etc. The principle on which it is operated cannot

be disclosed here, but it will afford no end of fun for any person who has one. Price, 15 cents each, by mail, postpaid.

FRANK SMITH, 383 Lenox Ave., N. Y.

SNAPPER PENCIL



Sometimes your jocosely friend helps himself to the pencil sticking up from your vest pocket. Let him take this one. When he attempts to use it, a pair of springs shoot out and rap him so smartly on the knuckles that he swears-off taking

other people's property. A dandy little trick affording no end of amusement.

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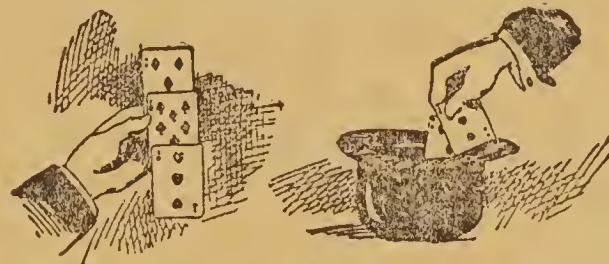
MINIATURE COMPASS CHARM.



A beautiful charm, to be worn on the watch chain. It consists of a true and perfect compass, to which is attached, by a pivot, a powerful magnifying glass. When not

in use the magnifying glass fits closely inside the compass and is not seen. The compass is protected by a glass crystal, and is handsomely silver-nickel plated and burnished, presenting a very attractive appearance. Here you have a reliable compass, a powerful magnifying glass, and a handsome charm, all in one. It is a Parisian novelty, entirely new. Price, 25c. by mail, postpaid.

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THE DEVIL'S CARD TRICK.—From three cards held in the hand anyone is asked to mentally select one. All three cards are placed in a hat and the performer removes first the two that the audience did not select and passing the hat to them their card has mysteriously vanished. A great climax; highly recommended. Price, 10c.

FRANK SMITH, 383 Lenox Ave., N. Y.

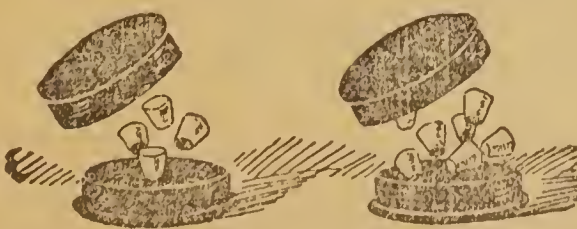
SURPRISE KINEMATOGRAPH.



The greatest hit of the season! It consists of a small metal, nickeled tube, with a lens eye view, which shows a pretty ballet girl in tights. Hand it to a friend, who will be delighted with the first picture; tell him to turn the screw in center of instru-

ment to change the views, when a stream of water squirts into his face, much to his disgust. Anyone who has not seen this kinematograph in operation is sure to be caught every time. The instrument can be refilled with water in an instant, ready for the next customer. Price 25c. by mail, postpaid.

WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.



THE MULTIPLYING CORKS.—A small round box is shown to be empty and one of the spectators is allowed to place three corks in it. The cover is put on and the box is handed to one of the spectators, who, upon removing the cover, finds six corks in the box. Three of the corks are now made to vanish as mysteriously as they came. Very deceptive. Price, 15c.

H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.

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& HAY FEVER REMEDY sent by express to you on Free Trial. If it cures send \$1; if not, don't. Give express office. Write today. Address W. K. STERLINE, 837 Poplar St. Sidney, Ohio

TOBACCO HABIT

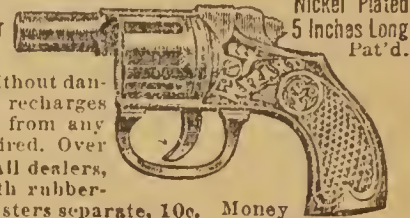
You can conquer it easily in 3 days. Improve your health, prolong your life. No more stomach trouble, no foul breath, no heart weakness. Regain manly vigor, calm nerves, clear eyes and superior mental strength. Whether you chew or smoke pipe, cigarettes, cigars, get my interesting Tobacco Book. Worth its weight in gold. Mailed free. E. J. WOODS. II 228 Station E. New York, N. Y.

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Pack of \$1,000 Stage Bills, 10c; 3 packs, 25c. Send for a pack and show the boys what a WAD you carry. C. A. NICHOLS, JR., Box 90, Chili, N. Y.

Wizard Repeating LIQUID PISTOL

Guaranteed Will stop the most vicious dog (or man) without permanent injury. Nickel Plated 5 Inches Long Pat'd.



Perfectly safe to carry without danger of leakage. Fires and recharges by pulling trigger. Loads from any liquid. No cartridges required. Over six shots in one loading. All dealers, or by mail, 50c. Pistol with rubber-covered holster, 55c. Holsters separate, 10c. Money order or U. S. stamps. No coins. PARKER, STEARNS & CO., - 273 Georgia Avenue, - Brooklyn, N. Y.



THE PRINCESS OF YOGI CARD TRICK.—Four cards are held in the form of a fan and a spectator is requested to mentally select one of the four. The cards are now shuffled and one is openly taken away and placed in

his pocket. The performer remarks that he has taken the card mentally selected by the spectator. The three cards are now displayed and the selected card is found to be missing. Reaching in his pocket the performer removes and exhibits the chosen card. Price, 15c.

FRANK SMITH, 383 Lenox Ave., N. Y.

SURPRISE MOVING-PICTURE MACHINE.



It consists of a small nickeled metal tube, 4 1/2 inches long, with a lens eye-view, which shows a pretty ballet girl or any other scene. Hand it to a friend who will be delighted with the first picture, tell him to turn the screw on the side of the instrument, to change the views, when a stream of water squirts in his face, much to his surprise. The instrument can be refilled with water in an instant, and one filling will suffice for four or five victims.

Price, 30c. each by mail, postpaid; 4 for \$1.00. C. BEHR, 150 W. 62d St., New York City.

THE DISAPPEARING CIGAR.

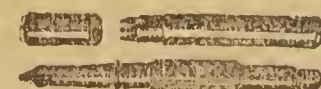


A new and startling trick. You ask a friend if he will have a cigar; if he says yes (which is usually the case), you take from your pocket

or cigar case, an ordinary cigar, and hand it to him. As he reaches out for it, the cigar instantly disappears right before his eyes, much to his astonishment. You can apologize, saying, you are very sorry, but that it was the last cigar you had, and the chances are that he will invite you to smoke with him if you will let him into the secret. It is not done by sleight-of-hand, but the cigar actually disappears so suddenly that it is impossible for the eye to follow it, and where it has gone, no one can tell. A wonderful illusion. Price, 10c.; 3 for 25c. by mail, postpaid.

C. BEHR, 150 W. 62d St., New York City.

AUTOMATIC COPYING PENCIL.



The importance of carrying a good reliable pencil need not be dwelt upon here. It is an absolute necessity with us all.

The holder of this pencil is beautifully nickeled with grooved box-wood handle, giving a firm grip in writing; the pencil automatically supplies the lead as needed while a box of these long leads are given with each pencil. The writing of this pencil is indelible the same as ink, and thus can be used in writing letters, addressing envelopes, etc. Bills of account or invoices made out with this pencil can be copied the same as if copying ink was used. It is the handiest pencil on the market; you do not require a knife to keep it sharp; it is ever ready, ever safe, and just the thing to carry.

Price of pencil, with box of leads complete, only 10c.; 3 for 25c.; one dozen 90c. postpaid.

WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.



TRICK COIN HOLDER. — The coin holder is attached to a ring, made so as to fit anyone's finger. The holder clamps tightly a 25c. piece. When the ring is

placed on the finger with the coin showing on the palm of the hand and offered in change it cannot be picked up. A nice way to tip people. Price by mail, postpaid, 10c. each.

WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.

PIN MOUSE.



It is made of cast metal and has the exact color, shape and size of a live mouse. Pinned on your or somebody else's clothes, will have a startling effect upon the spectators. The screaming fun had by this little novelty, especially in the presence of ladies, is more than can be imagined. If a cat happens to be there, there's no other fun to be compared with it.

Price, 10c. each by mail, postpaid; 3 for 25c. FRANK SMITH, 383 Lenox Ave., N. Y.

RAVELLING JOKE.



Yards upon yards of laughs. Don't miss it! Everyone falls for this one. It consists of a nice little bobbin around which is wound a spool of thread. You pin the bobbin under the lapel of your coat, and pull the end of the thread through your button hole, then watch your friends try to pick the piece of thread off your coat.

Enough said! Get one! Price, 12c. each, by mail. Postage stamps taken same as money. WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.

THE TOM-TOM DRUM.



Hold the drum in one hand and with the thumb of the other resting against the side of the drum manipulate the drumstick with the fingers of the same hand (as indicated in the cut). With practice it is possible to attain as great skill as with a real drum. The movable sounding board can be adjusted for either heavy or light playing. They are used extensively in schools for marching.

Price, 10c. each, delivered free.

C. BEHR, 150 W. 62d St., New York City.

TRICK PUZZLE PURSE.



The first attempt usually made to open it, is to press down the little knob in the center of the purse, when a small needle runs out and stabs them in the finger, but does not open it. You can open it before their eyes and still they will be unable to open it.

Price, 25c. each by mail, postpaid. WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.



JUMPING CARD.—A pretty little trick, easy to perform. Effect: A selected card returned to the deck jumps high into the air at the performer's command. Pack is held in one hand. Price of apparatus, with enough cards to perform the trick, 10c.

C. BEHR, 150 W. 62d St., New York City.



HUMANATONE.

The improved Humanatone. This flute will be found to be the most enjoyable article ever offered; nickel plated, finely polished; each put up in a box with full instruction how to use them. Price, 18c., postpaid.

FRANK SMITH, 383 Lenox Ave., N. Y.

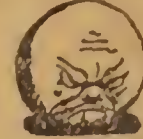
GET A LOCUST.



Clicks like a telegraph sounder. The best rooter made, for Baseball Games, Meetings, and Sporting Events. Just the thing to make a big noise. So small you can carry it in your vest pocket, but it is as good as a brass band, made of lacquered metal, and stamped to look exactly like a locust. It is as ornamental as it is useful. Suitable for young and old. Price, 12c. each, by mail.

WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.

HOT AIR CARDS.



There are 8 cards in a pack. They are printed on good bristol board, and contain the funniest literature ever composed, such as "Professor Huggem, hugging and kissing done in the very latest style," a Liar's License, a membership card for the Down and Out Club, and other comical poetry and prose. Every card guaranteed to make the girls giggle, the boys laugh, and the old folks to roar. If you are looking for fun, get a pack.

Price 10 cents a pack, by mail, Post-paid. WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.

THE MAGIC CIGAR CASE.

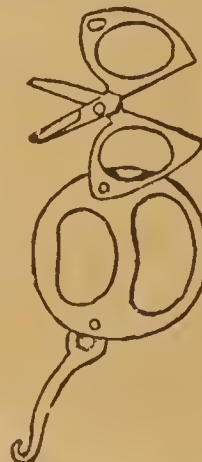


A beautiful and perfect cigar case, made of imitation alligator and sealskin leather; worth a quarter as a cigar case alone. It can be shown full of cigars and instantly handed to a person,

who, upon opening it, finds only an empty case. The box has a secret spring and a double case, and can be operated only by one in the secret. Full printed instructions sent with each case. Every smoker should have one. Price, 20c.; 2 for 35c. by mail, postpaid; one dozen by express, \$1.50.

H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.

HANDY TOOL.



Every boy should possess one of these handy little instruments. It consists of a buttonhook, a cigar-cutter, scissors, key-ring and bottle-opener, all in one. The steel is absolutely guaranteed. Small catches hold it so that it cannot open in the pocket. Price by mail, postpaid, 15 cents each.

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